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MEMOIRS

OF

SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq.

WITH

A COLLECTION

OF HIS GENUINE

BON-MOTS, ANECDOTES, OPINIONS, &c.

MOSTLY ORIGINAL.

AND

THREE OF HIS DRAMATIC PIECES,

Not published in his Works.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

By WILLIAM COOKE, Esq.

——"A merrier man
I never spent an hour's talk withal,
His eye begat occasion for his wit;
For every object that the one did catch,
The other turn'd to a mirth-moving jest."

SHAKSPEARE.

New-York:

PRINTED FOR PETER A. MESIER,

NO 107, PEARL-STREET.

1806.

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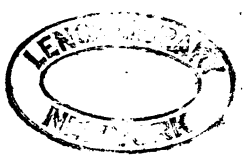
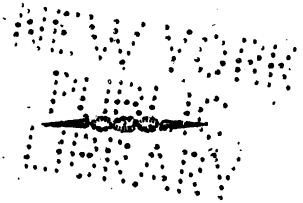


INTRODUCTION.



INSTEAD of making an apology for writing the life of SAMUEL FOOTE, an apology should perhaps be made for not having given to the public long ago some account of this very extraordinary man; who, independently of many other talents, stands so singular as a modern dramatic writer, that even at this day we have little hopes of "looking upon his like again."

THIS neglect can only be accounted for on conjectural principles. His satirical turn, no doubt, made him many enemies, and these had an interested reason on this subject; while others, though they might have a quick relish for his wit and conversation, may not have felt themselves capable "to carry a bon-mot steadily." Some too fully qualified for the office of a biographer, may be liable to the indolence often attendant upon genius; which proposes and procrastinates till, delay becoming habit, "the business of to-morrow" goes off "from day to day, to the last syllable of recorded time."

IT is now near thirty years since the death of Foote; and yet, except a meagre collection of a few dates and facts published in the *Biographia Dramatica* (like what we sometimes find in the miscella-

nies of the French poets), and since literally retailed in a number of theatrical catch-pennies, no written account of him is extant. Of his jests, bon-mots, &c. there have been many professed publications; but those who are in the least acquainted with the character of Foote, must see at one view, that in these his name has been merely adopted to deceive the crowd, who know not how to discriminate *sterling* from *adulterated metal*.

It was from seeing this literary object in so perishable a state, and from wishing to preserve a name of such celebrity from floating down the tide of oblivion, that the present Editor has been induced to publish these Memoirs: but it is now necessary for him to state his own pretensions.

VERY early in life he had the pleasure of being introduced to this genuine son of comic humor; and finding in him all the charms of conversation which could attach a young man with a literary and lively turn of mind, he was careful in recollecting and noting down as many of his anecdotes, conversations, bon-mots, &c. as convenience would permit: not with any intent, at that time, to publish them; but as the records of a man who drew on him the gaze of the fashionable and literary world,—as the reminiscences of hours which afforded such exquisite delight.

ON the death of Foote, which happened about nine years after their first acquaintance, the Editor had the pleasure of continuing in acquaintance with many respectable persons who were the intimates of his late friend's earlier days,

and who had seen him in all the situations of his varied life. From these he was curious to glean as much of his manners, habits, and conversation, as he could; and from their readiness to oblige, as well as from the researches of an old and valuable friend (whose name, which he is not permitted to mention here, would be a passport for every thing curious or authentic in literary or dramatic history), he has collected such materials as embolden him to publish these volumes. He is at the same time ready to allow that the work might have been more enlarged, had it been begun immediately after the death of Foote, by some of those cotemporaries here alluded to; when the ardor of congenial talents, and the raciness of events, would have made greater and more forcible impressions: but under the actual circumstances, he not only presumes that his

performance will be found the best that has yet appeared, but is rather sanguine in thinking it the best that can now be effected.

THE first part consists of Memoirs of Foote; in which every thing material relative to his life and dramatic pursuits is accurately stated, from written documents and the best traditional information.

IN the second will be found a collection of his bon-mots, &c. Some of these have appeared in other collections: but such as had the similitude of being genuine have been admitted; the Editor not thinking himself at liberty to refuse them a place here, merely because they had been involuntarily dragged into bad company.

Of the characters, anecdotes, opinions, &c. most were related by Foote himself, and many by the literary society in which he lived. Some, being either referred to in the range of conversation, or growing out of a corresponding subject, the Editor thought fit to subjoin, from a wish to give to the original matter a richness of appropriate coloring and diversification.

In short, *this* part may be considered not only as the *school of Foote*, but of his time: where the hero is discovered among his friends and cotemporaries "in his nightgown and slippers;" where the wit, the whim, the humor, the taste, and general character, of the man will be best seen; and where perhaps will be found the best apology for many parts of his life; as "he who had such jocular

propensities, with such inexhaustible sources of pleasing mankind, could have no serious views for ever becoming their enemy."

W. COOKE.

Half Moon Street,
August, 1805.

MEMOIRS

OF

SAMUEL FOOTE.

OF the uses of biography so much has been already said, that it is almost *unnecessary* to add to the number of encomiasts. Theoretic writers only lay down rules by which mankind may be instructed by precept; but biography describes events, not as they *might* but as they actually *have* happened; facts, not hypothesis: so that, as in a chart, where the different coasts are delineated, here we have the several virtues and vices of the individual, to serve us as so many marks of direction through the eventual voyage of human life.

The subject of these memoirs adds to the above advantages a degree of *novelty* rarely to be met with in the general classes of mankind. He not only stands an *unique*, as a modern dramatic author, but may be considered equally so, in the circles of wit, humor, and brilliant conversation. Other comic writers have merely shown

"the body of the time its general form and pressure," but Foote has soared beyond this common flight, he has adventured to drag the objects of vice and folly individually before the public, and with a kind of dramatic boldness (unknown to any stage since the days of Aristophanes) to punish the delinquents in the first instance, as a warning to others: and here he has, generally, so regulated his satire, that although a single character may now and then be distinguished, it seems to embrace a whole genus.

We do not however wholly vindicate this talent. For though there are some enormities which the laws of their country cannot reach, the laws of the STAGE may be supposed to do with some advantage to society; yet there are persons whose little peculiarities of temper and constitution (however they may subject them to remark,) are so blended with blameless manners, and a good heart, as should shield them from wanton and cruel aggressions. Authors of this stamp we do not pretend to excuse; we are writing the life of a man, not an apology for his life; as biography would be worse than useless to mankind, if it did not operate as an example of reproof, as well as of approbation. It must therefore speak for itself. Yet thus much we will venture to say, that allowing for some instances of ill directed satire, taking Foote in general as a *dramatic writer*, an *actor*, a *wit*, an *humorist*, and *lively companion*, he stands on so high a scale of eminence, that all must exclaim, "This was a most extraordinary man!"

Samuel Foote was born at Truro, in Cornwall, about the year 1720: his father, John Foote, was a very useful magistrate of that county, and enjoyed the posts of commissioner of the prize office and fine contract. His mother (descended in the female line from the old Earl of Rutland) was the daughter of Sir Edward Goodere, bart. who represented the county of Hereford in parliament for several years, and brought Mr. Foote a large fortune, which she principally acquired from the following unhappy circumstance.

This lady had two surviving brothers (out of six), Sir John Dinley Goodere, bart. and Samuel Goodere, Captain of his Majesty's ship the Ruby. A disagreement, from what cause it is now difficult to trace, arose between the two brothers, which induced Sir John to cut off the entail of his estates, (except seven hundred per year, which he could not assign), and settle them on his sister's family. This, of course, widened the breach; and the brothers, in consequence, had not spoken to each other for several years.

Matters were in this train (January 1741) when the two brothers arrived by accident at Bristol, Sir John upon a party of pleasure, and Samuel as commander of his ship, (the Ruby,) then lying in King's road; when the latter hearing that Sir John was to dine at Mr. Jarrit Smith's, a respectable attorney, on College Green, Bristol, on the Sunday following, he earnestly requested of that gentleman to admit him as a guest on the same day, in order to reconcile himself to his brother; saying, at the same time, "that

the difference had subsisted too long for their mutual happiness and peace of mind."

Mr. Smith readily acceded to this proposal, and on the day appointed, introduced the two brothers to each other, who were soon seemingly reconciled upon the most friendly and cordial terms. Mr. Smith seeing this, left them for near an hour, in order to afford them a better opportunity of unbosoming themselves with more freedom upon family affairs, and on his return was happy to see, not only every shade of difference done away, but an exchange of the most warm and fraternal affection. In this manner they parted about six o'clock in the evening, the Captain taking his leave first, but promising to renew his visits whilst Sir John remained in that neighborhood.

But, alas! all this on the part of Captain Goodere was only the prelude to one of the basest and most savage transactions that modern times can instance. Scarcely had Sir John left Mr. Smith's house, when passing by College Green coffee-house, a body of ruffians, (some belonging to the Ruby man of war, and others to the Vernon privateer,) with Captain Goodere at their head, suddenly seized upon him, and hurried him away with the utmost violence to a boat attending in the river, and from thence on board the Ruby, the Captain assisting all this while, and covering his brother with a cloak, in order to deaden the cries of murder, which he repeatedly vociferated during this unnatural assault.

When they had got him into the Purser's cabin, the Captain, by promises of reward and promotion, prevailed upon two of the ruffians (Matthew Mahony and Charles White) to strangle him. Poor Sir John begged hard for his life, "pleaded his near relationship, his age, his innocence, and his willingness to do every thing agreeable to his brother's inclinations," but all in vain! The Captain told the crew "that he was a desperate madman, and must be made away with;" he accordingly cut the cord which tied his escritoir to the floor of the cabin, and passing it himself round his brother's neck, desired the two ruffians to do their duty, whilst he stood centinel at the door, with a drawn sword in his hand, to prevent any body passing that way.

Owing to the awkwardness arising from their compunction and the struggles of Sir John, they were above half an hour in accomplishing this horrid murder. At last, when it was over, the Captain very deliberately walked into the cabin with a lighted candle in his hand, and after feeling and surveying his brother's dead body for some time, exclaimed, "Aye, this will do, his business is now done!"

The next day, the circumstance of a gentleman being hurried over College Green in a violent manner by some ruffians, and the cries of murder being repeatedly heard, induced Mr. Smith to make some further inquiry; when finding the description of the gentleman exactly answer to the person of Sir John

Dinley Goodere, &c. he had strong suspicion of some foul play having been shown him by his brother; not, as he afterwards said, "that he could suppose any thing like murder in the case, but for some sinister purpose of forcing him into pecuniary arrangements." Under this suspicion, he applied to the Mayor of Bristol for a warrant to search the Ruby, which was accordingly granted, and there Sir John was found strangled in the Purser's cabin, and the Captain already secured by the first Lieutenant and two of the men, who had overheard all the particular conferences relative to the murder.

His two associates, White and Mahony, were soon after taken; when the verdict of the coroner declaring them all guilty of *wilful murder*, they were tried at the ensuing assizes at Bristol on the 26th of March, 1741, before Henry Coombe, esq. mayor, and Sir Michael Foster, recorder, when being convicted on the fullest and clearest evidence, they soon after suffered the sentence of the law.*

Thus, Mrs. Foote deriving under the will of her brother Sir John Dinley Goodere, became heiress to his estates.

John Foote had two sons by this lady, Samuel and Edward. The first, the subject of these memoirs, was designed for the bar; the second for the church, which he afterwards entered into, but being naturally

* For the particulars of this extraordinary trial, see the Appendix.

a very weak man, and without preferment, he dribbled away his patrimonial fortune, and was latterly in a great degree supported by the liberality of his brother.

The father died soon after the establishment of his children in the world, but the mother lived to the extreme age of *eighty-four*, through various fortunes. We had the pleasure of dining with her in company with a grand daughter of her's, at a barrister's chambers in Gray's Inn, when she was at the advanced age of *seventy-nine;* and though she had full sixty steps to ascend before she reached the drawing room, which looked into the gardens, she did it without the help of a cane, or any other support, with all the activity of a woman of forty.

Her manners and conversation were of the same cast; witty, humorous, and convivial; and though her remarks, occasionally, (considering her age and sex,) rather strayed "beyond the limits of becoming mirth," she, on the whole, delighted every body, and was confessedly the heroine of that day's party.

She was likewise in face and person the very model of her son Samuel—short, fat, and flabby, with an eye that eternally gave the signal for mirth and good humor: in short, she resembled him so much in all her movements, and so strongly identified his person and manners, that by changing habits, they might be thought to have interchanged sexes.

And here, perhaps, it will be necessary to pause, in order to trace the source from which her son might

probably have derived that abundant store of wit and humor he so early displayed, and circulated through the whole course of his life.

"Genius (says Dr. Johnson) is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to some particular direction:" and we are told by the same author, "that the late Sir Joshua Reynolds had the first fondness for his art excited by the perusal of Richardson's treatise on painting." This definition, no doubt, will generally apply to the cultivation of arts and sciences; but *true wit* is neither altogether inductive, nor mechanical: a man may read works of humor till he is blind, and spend his last guinea in the company of wits, without becoming one himself: deny him the original stamina, education, like armor upon the weak, will but incumber him, and habit render him petulant and troublesome, destined to settle in, perhaps, a miserable punster, or the uniform narrator of a twentieth told tale.

Where then shall we look for this first impulse in Foote? he could not have it from his father, who, by every account, was a plain, regular country gentleman; nor from his brother, who was so *imbecile* both in mind and body, that he had scarcely power to provide for himself in any department of life. May we not, then, with some propriety ascribe this extraordinary natural talent as hereditary from his mother? who not only transmitted to him her face and person, but likewise the model of her mind, which, polished by a higher education, and a selection of congenial company, ri-

pened into all that richness and luxuriance of fancy, which was so long the delight and admiration of the gay, the fashionable, and literary world.

Some of our best poets have given such early proofs of their talent for versification, that they have been said "to lisp in numbers." Foote had this early talent for wit and humor, as long before he left his family roof he showed it in a variety of instances; insomuch, that we have often heard him say, "he was the *father* of many (that were then called good things) when he was but a *mere child*."

His first education was at one of the three principal grammar schools long since founded in the city of Worcester, and which have always borne a considerable reputation for learning in all its branches, as well as a general attention to the morals of the pupils. The school to which he was sent was, at that time, under the care of Dr. Miles, a particular friend of his father's, and a man of great eminence in the discharge of his duties. Many stories are told of the freaks of young Foote while he resided at this school; such as his being the leader and contriver of a celebrated barring-out (a species of occasional rebellion common among the youths of those days), blacking his master's face while asleep, forming artificial earthquakes under his master's chair, &c.; all of which, however, did not impede his progress in learning, as he went through his school exercises at least with as much credit as some of the first scholars in his class.

Though these frolics marked the general eccentricity of his mind, the following circumstance first unfolded those peculiar talents for mimickry, which afterwards so much distinguished him among all classes of society.

Being at his father's house during the Christmas recess, a man in the parish had been charged with a bastard child; and this business being to be heard the next day before the bench of justices, the family were conversing about it after dinner, and making various observations. Samuel, then a boy between eleven and twelve years of age, was silent for some time; at last he drily observed, "Well, I foresee how this business will end, as well as what the justices will say upon it."—"Aye," said his father (rather surprised at the boy's observation), "well, Sam, let us hear it." Upon this the young mimick, dressing up his face in a strong caricature likeness of justice D——, thus proceeded: "Hem! hem! here's a fine job of work broke out indeed! a *feller* begetting bastards under our very noses, (and let me tell you good people, a common laboring rascal too,) when our taxes are so great, and our poor rates so high; why 'tis an abomination; we shall not have an honest servant maid in the neighborhood, and the whole parish will swarm with bastards; therefore, I say, let him be fined for his pranks very severely; and if the rascal has not money, (as indeed how should he have it?) or can't find security, (as indeed how should such a *feller* find security?) let him be clapp'd up in prison till he pays it."

"Justice A—will be milder, and say, 'Well, well, brother, this is not a new case, bastards have been begotten before now, and bastards will be begotten to the end of the chapter; therefore, though the man has committed a crime—and indeed I must say a crime that holds out a very bad example to a neighborhood like this—yet let us not ruin the poor fellow for this one fault: he may do better another time, and mend his life; therefore, as the man is poor, let him be obliged to provide for the child according to the best of his abilities, giving two honest neighbors as security for the payment.'"

He mimicked these two justices with so much humor and discrimination of character, as "to set the table in a roar;" and, among the rest, his father, who demanded, why *he* was left out, as he also was one of the Quorum? Samuel for some time hesitated; but his father and the rest of the company earnestly requesting it, he began:—

"Why, upon my word, in respect to this here business, to be sure it is rather an awkward affair; and to be sure it ought not to be; that is to say, the justices of the peace should not suffer such things to be done with impunity:—however, on the whole, I am rather of my brother A——'s opinion; which is, that the man should pay according to his circumstances, and be admonished—I say *admonished**—not to commit so flagrant an offence for the future."

* A favorite word of his father's on the bench; which, with his plain matter-of-fact manner of pronouncing it, and twirling

After passing through his school education with the character of an arch, clever lad, he went out, in course of election, for Worcester college.

This college was anciently called Gloucester hall, from the benedictine monks of Gloucester, who educated their pupils here in academical learning. On the suppression of religious houses, Henry VIIIth granted it to Dr. Robert King, the first bishop of Oxford, as a palace for him and his successors, who remained in possession of it as long as the see was at Ouseney.

It was purchased afterwards by St. John's college, and called St. John Baptist's hall; a fellow of St. John's being principal of it; and so it remained until 1714, when Sir Thomas Cocks Winford, a second cousin of Foote's, founded it anew, under the title of Worcester college, by a charter obtained from Queen Anne in the last year of her reign, establishing here a provost, six fellows, and six scholars.

It was to this college that our hero was removed by election, and put under the care of Dr. Gower, the then provost. Gower was a man of considerable learning, but rather of a grave, pedantic turn of mind; and pedantry was to Foote an irresistible bait for every kind of wit and humor: he sought for nothing but the

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his thumbs at the same time, drew so correct a picture of the justice, as met the warmest approbation of the whole company; and even of his father, who so far from being offended, rewarded him for his good humor and pleasantry.

ridiculous in every man's character; and having once ascertained this point, he filled the canvass by means of his own luxuriant imagination.

One of the first tricks he played upon the doctor, was the following:—The church belonging to the college fronted the side of a lane where cattle were sometimes turned out to graze during the night, and from the steeple hung the bell rope, very low in the middle of the outside porch. Foote saw in this an object likely to produce some fun, and immediately set about to accomplish his purpose. He accordingly one night slily tied a wisp of hay to the rope, as a bait for the cows in their peregrination to the grazing ground. The scheme succeeded to his wish. One of the cows soon after smelling the hay as she passed by the church-door, instantly seized on it, and, by tugging at the rope, made the bell ring, to the astonishment of the sexton and the whole parish.

This happened several nights successively, and the incident gave rise to various reports,—such as not only that the church was haunted by evil spirits, but that several spectres were seen walking about the church-yard, in all those hideous and frightful shapes which fear, ignorance, and fancy, usually suggest on such occasions.

An event of this kind, however, was to be explored, for the honor of philosophy, as well as for the quiet of the parish. Accordingly the doctor and the sexton agreed to sit up one night, and on the first alarm, to

run out and drag the culprit to condign punishment. Their plan being arranged, they waited with the utmost impatience for the appointed signal;—at last the bell began to sound its usual alarm, and they both sallied out in the dark, determined on making a discovery.

The sexton was the first in the attack. He seized the cow by the tail, and cried out "it was a gentleman commoner, as he had him by the tail of his gown;" while the doctor, who had caught the cow by the horns at the same time, immediately replied, "No, no, you blockhead, 'tis the postman, and here I have hold of the rascal by his blowing-horn." Lights however were immediately brought, when the character of the real offender was discovered, and the laugh of the whole town was turned upon the doctor.

At another time, when Foote was enjoined to learn certain tasks in consequence of his idleness, he used to come forward with a large folio dictionary under his arm, and present himself before the doctor with great seeming gravity and submission. "Well, Sir, what do you want?"—"Sir, I am come to do away the imposition laid upon me."—"What do you mean by *imposition?* I would have you know, Sir, I impose upon nobody;"—"I am sure then, Sir, if you did not *impose* this duty upon me, I should never have taken a natural fancy to it."

Here the doctor usually growled, and desired him to go on, which the other generally did with a degree of talent and perspicuity that often confounded his exam-

ner. After this, the doctor would read his pupil a lecture on idleness, and on the great danger of following the ebullitions of fancy in preference to the dictates of sober judgment; describing also the figure he might make in the world, if he took the proper course; and, on the contrary, the contempt and misery which must follow a life of inattention and dissipation.

The doctor, in delivering this lecture to his pupil, did it in a sour, dogmatical, pedantic manner, accompanied with a number of hard words and quaint phrases; the other, being prepared for these, immediately interrupted him, and after begging pardon, with great formality, would take his dictionary from under his arm, and pretending to find the meaning of the word, would say, "Very well, Sir; now please to go on."

In this manner Foote passed the time usually spent at the university; not that he was altogether idle in respect to study, for he had an ambition that counteracted his love of pleasure, and frequently induced him to turn his attention to his books: and thus besides rendering himself a very competent Greek and Latin scholar, he pursued a course of *belles lettres* reading, very rare in young men of his description.

From college, he entered himself of the Temple, and took chambers accordingly, with a view (at least as his friends hoped) of becoming a member of that society; but the study of the law was little suited to the eccentricities of such a character! Yet I by no means

agree with the common remark, "that the law is of so dry and unfruitful a nature, as to chill the livelier sallies of the mind, and depress all genius." On the contrary, I think with Cicero, "that it is a species of knowledge of the most extensive import; a business of science, ingenuity, diligence and reflection;" in which argument may frequently be supported by wit, and wit may occasionally lend its perspicuity to argument. But Foote was so far from combining the talents of wit and judgment to advantage in a sober profession like the law, that his mind only led him to ridicule it; and had it been his lot to be unavoidably chained down to this profession, he would in all probability, like Momus among the gods, have busied himself only in keeping up the ball of wit, good humor and buffoonery.

During his continuance in the Temple, he was seen there *pro forma*, situated in handsome chambers, surrounded by a well furnished library, and eating his way (*viâ* commons) to the profession of the law. He is remembered by a few now living, in that situation; and they report him to have been one of the greatest beaux (even in those days of general dress,) as well as one of the most distinguished wits, who frequented the Grecian and the Bedford.

These coffee-houses at that period, (now full sixty years ago,) were frequented principally by dramatic wits and young Templars. The Grecian had held its charter for wit and taste ever since the beginning of the last century: here the Templars opened their

morning rounds in their elegant *robes de chambre* and morocco slippers, and from this place many of the papers of Addison, in the Spectator, are dated.

The Bedford principally laid claim to dramatic criticism, when that science bore a much prouder name in the annals of literature than it does at present; here the wits generally supped after the play, and passed judgment freely on the several authors, actors, and managers.

The stage at that time formed a general topic of conversation among all ranks of people. It had been just relieved from a long usurpation of mummery and frivolity, which for the most part occupied it from the relinquishment of the elder Cibber, to the commencement of Garrick; and during that period the old stock plays were so entirely abandoned by the managers, partly through ignorance, and partly through a too eager desire to recruit their exhausted fortunes, that a number of ladies of the first distinction entered into a subscription for exhibiting the plays of Shakspeare weekly, in order to recover the drooping spirit of the Drama, and prevent the total extinction of our old dramatic writers.

In the infancy of this restoration Foote appeared; in the flush of youth, wit, and fortune. Dr. Barrowby, no mean judge in every thing which respected elegant knowledge, was present at his first exhibition at the Bedford, and he always spoke of him as a young man of most extraordinary talents.—"He came into the room," said he, "dressed out in a frock suit

of green and silver lace, bag wig, sword, *bouquet*, and point ruffles, and immediately joined the critical circle of the upper end of the room. Nobody knew him. He, however, soon boldly entered into conversation; and by the brilliancy of his wit, the justness of his remarks, and the unembarrassed freedom of his manners, attracted the general notice. The buz of the room went round, 'Who is he? whence comes he?' &c. which nobody could answer; until a handsome carriage stopping at the door to take him to the assembly of a lady of fashion, they learned from the servants that his name was Foote, that he was a young gentleman of family and fortune, and a student of the Inner Temple."

He continued in the Temple but a very few years; and yet even this period was sufficient to exhaust a fortune, which, by all account, was very considerable, and which perhaps, with a genteel economy, might have given him the *otium cum dignitate* independent of any profession. But he was incapable of the ordinary restraints of life: he dashed into all the prevailing dissipations of the time; and what the extravagance of dress, living, &c. had not done, the gaming table finally accomplished. He struggled with embarrassments for some time; but want, imperious want, is an austere monitor, and must at last be attended to by the most thoughtless spendthrift. He accordingly soon found himself at a stand; his creditors grew obstinate and impatient; his friends, as is usual in such cases, deserted him; and he found that something must necessarily be done, to provide the means of subsistence.

In this situation, it was very natural for him to think of the stage. *Acting* was a science which he already knew theoretically; and, conversing so much with players as he usually did, he was perhaps not a little incited by their disengaged, *free* manner of living, to become a candidate for the profession—a desire which the following opportunity might have accelerated.

Macklin, in conjunction with Garrick and others, had, from the repeated ill management of Fleetwood, the manager, seceded from Drury-lane Theatre in the year 1743; and though Garrick afterwards made his peace with the manager, and returned to his duty, Macklin was left to shift for himself, which occasioned not only law suits, but a violent paper war, that took up much of the dramatic attention of that time.—Macklin, however, was not a man to yield to despondency; he looked into the resources of his mind, and at last adopted a plan of employing himself, which, if it had met with sufficient encouragement, would have contributed much to the improvement of the stage.

He collected a company of performers at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, all novices in the art, whom he undertook to instruct in the principles of the drama; of whom Mr. Hill (afterwards the celebrated Sir John Hill, who was likewise one of the performers) gives the following account, in a work published many years ago, *On Stage Recitation.*

"There was a time" says he, "when that extravagance which has been recommended for farce, had

its place in tragedy, both in action and delivery; the gestures were forced, and beyond all that ever was in nature, and the recitation was a kind of singing. We are at present getting more into nature in playing; and if the violence of gesture be not quite suppressed, we have nothing of the *recitative* of the old tragedy. It is to the honor of Mr. Macklin, that he began this great improvement.* There was a time when he was excluded the Theatres, and supported himself by a company, whom he taught to play, some of whom made no inconsiderable figure.

"It was his manner to check all the cant and cadence of tragedy: he would bid his pupil first speak the passage as he would in common life, if he had occasion to speak the same words; and then, giving them more force, but preserving the same accent, to deliver them on the stage. When the player was faulty in his stop or accents, he set him right; and with nothing more than this attention to what was natural, he produced out of the most ignorant persons, players that often surprised the audience."†

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* Though Macklin might have begun this improvement theoretically, and by private teaching, Garrick was the first (in the year 1741) who, by the justness of his own powerful example, dissolved the charms of the old school.

† Among other instances of this, there was a man of the name of Yorke, who obtained, even to his own surprise, great applause in the little character of Montano, in Othello, which consists of

To join this theatrical muster roll, Macklin held out every encouragement to his young friend Foote, with whom he had been for some time acquainted at the Bedford, and other places in the outset of his fashionable career. Foote's necessities and inclinations induced him to become a willing recruit; and he accordingly made his first *entré* at the Haymarket Theatre on the 6th of February, 1744, in the character of Othello; Iago by Mr. Macklin, and Lodovico by Mr. Hill.

How a man so exclusively comic as Foote, should think of a tragic part for his *début*, and one where all the contending passions of tragedy are so powerfully delineated as in Othello, would be a matter of surprise, did we not consider, that the prevailing passion of most of our stage candidates points to the *lover* and the *hero*. These seem to be the general pursuits of most young minds; who, by a combination very natural to that period of life, wish to impress those characters (particularly on the female part of the audience) as belonging to *themselves*, independent of the poet. This will account for his having so much mistaken inclination for genius; for though he might have found his powers calculated for the comic in private life, on

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scarcely a dozen lines: but these he spoke, from Macklin's instructions, with so much feeling and propriety, as induced one of the managers to engage him at a considerable salary. But in higher characters, and left to himself, he lost the reputation he had acquired.

the stage he had the ambition to show himself fitted for a higher sphere, and for assuming all the grandeur of the more elevated passions.

The trial, however, soon proved the contrary; for though the generality of the audience received him with every degree of indulgence, and many of the first distinction cheered him, from personal and family knowledge; his performance on the whole was found to be too imperfect for either public or private patronage. Macklin, who was the *Iago* in this play, said, on this occasion, "It was little better than a total failure; that his singling out this part was much against his (Macklin's) judgment, as neither his figure, voice, nor manners, corresponded with the character; and in those mixed passages of *tenderness* and *rage*, the former was expressed so *whiningly*, and the latter in a tone so *sharp* and *inharmonious*, that the audience could scarcely refrain from laughing. Not," added Macklin, "but one could plainly discover the scholar about the young man, and that he perfectly knew what the author meant; but in the exhibition of the passions (where nature alone must be the tutor) he was miserably defective."

His fate in *Othello*, though it did not entirely cure him of his rage for tragedy, induced him to listen to the advice of his friends, and to think of comedy as more suitable to his figure, talents, and natural feelings; but unfortunately the part in comedy which he adopted, seemed to be nearly as much out of his reach as Othello was in tragedy; it was in no less a charac-

ter than that of *Lord Foppington* in *The Relapse*, in which he made his second appearance on the 9th of April following.

As there is extant no *critique* on his performance of this character, it can be only spoken of from conjecture; and this will suggest that it must have been very far short of a real representation; as neither his figure nor his manners could represent, in dress, *hauteur* and *non-chalance*, the high-bred and formal coxcomb of fashion: and what must have thrown him to a still greater distance, was the public recollection of Cibber, who had been the reigning Lord Foppington for many years, and who was then living.

To participate in this disgrace, the manager himself played *Loveless*, (a gay, well-bred man of intrigue); which was a part so little fitted to Macklin's powers, that it must have been either uncommon vanity, or the general poverty of the company, that could force him into it. The representation of this comedy, however, is to be particularly noticed, as having first introduced to the stage the agreeable Miss Minors; who, in the little part of *Hoyden*, gave an early specimen of those abilities, which for so many years afterwards distinguished her in the comic line.

Disappointed in these two characters, his next attempt was in *Pierre*, in *Venice Preserved*; which turning out equally unsuccessful, at last induced him to abandon for ever all thoughts of tragedy, and enjoy himself in that element for which nature had so pre-eminently qualified him. In pursuance of this reso-

lution, he engaged the next winter at Drury-lane Theatre, where, turning his thoughts entirely to comedy, he successively appeared in *Fondlewife*, *Sir Paul Pliant*, *Bayes*, &c. His merit in those characters will be spoken of more fully in considering him as an actor; at present it is sufficient to say, that he met with general applause, and that most of these characters were occasionally favorites with the public to the last.

But notwithstanding this recovered ground, he was not thoroughly satisfied with himself; he felt within him powers fitted for much higher and independent pursuits: and after long meditation how he should employ them to the best advantage, at last struck out a path untrodden by any of his dramatic predecessors, by appearing in the double character of *author* and *performer*; and with this view opened the Haymarket Theatre in the spring of 1747, with a new piece of his own writing, called *The Diversions of the Morning*.

This consisted of the introduction of several characters in real life, then well known, whose manner of conversation and expression he very ludicrously hit-off in the diction of his drama, and further represented by an imitation not only of their tones of voice, but even of their very persons. Among these characters there were a certain physician, who was much better known from the oddity and singularity of his appearance and conversation, than from any eminence in the practice of his profession; a celebrated occulist at that time in the height of vogue and popu-

larity, &c.; and in the latter part of the piece, under the character of a theatrical director, he mimicked with great humor the several styles of most of the principal performers on the English stage.

An entertainment of this sort met at first with every degree of success that his most sanguine wishes could expect. The audience saw a species of performance quite novel to the stage, brought forward and supported by a young man, independent of any other auxiliary than the fertility of his own pen, and his own powers of performance; while the author, feeling himself bold in this support, beheld his future fortunes opening before him.

He soon found, however, that he reckoned without his host; for, whether from the alarm excited in the theatres royal, or the resentment of most of the performers who smarted under the lash of his mimickry, the civil magistrates of Westminster were called upon to interfere; and, under the sanction of an act of parliament, for limiting a number of play-houses, opposed to Bayes's new raised troops a *posse* of constables, who, entering the theatre in magisterial array, dismissed the audience, and left the laughing Aristophanes to consider of new ways and means for his support.

But he had now found out his *forte*: he likewise found that this *forte* had *personality* to favor it (a never-failing recommendation to him who caters for the public taste), therefore the original plan was not to

he abandoned; he had nothing to do but to evade the act, and then every thing was likely to flow in the same prosperous channel as before. Governing himself by this determination, instead of advertising the Diversions of the Morning, as before, he now only issued the following card:—

"Mr. Foote's compliments to his friends and the public, and hopes for the honor of their *drinking tea* with him at the Little Theatre in the Hay-market, every morning at play house prices."

The whim and novelty of this card drew crowds of people of all descriptions to his theatre. Some expected a real dish of tea, with all its paraphernalia: others only supposed it a dialogue, like tea-table conversation: but all, except a very few in the secret, were ignorant of the real species of entertainment. While the audience were on the tip-toe of expectation, the manager came forward, and after making his respectful bow, acquainted them, "that as he was training some young performers for the stage, he would, with their permission, (whilst *tea* was *getting ready*) proceed with his instructions before them."

This opened in a great degree the whole *manœuvre*: the joke succeeded to a tittle; and he not only proceeded without further molestation that morning, but through a course of *forty* others that season, in thus *giving tea* to crowded and splendid audiences.

But though our author gained fame and emolument by this conceit, the players felt sore on the occasion. Like the frog in the fable, they with great

propriety exclaimed, "Though this may be sport to you, it is death to us!" and therefore one and all reprobated the measure. Foote, however, was too high on the tide of prosperity, to listen to such complaints; he only laughingly replied, that "since that was the case, it was his duty to provide situations for such ladies and gentlemen so circumstanced; and that, instead of murdering blank verse, and assuming the characters of kings and queens, lords and ladies, for which their abilities were totally unfit, he would place them where their talents could with more propriety be employed." He therefore produced a kind of *mc-logue drama*, wherein he assigned to the then principal performers different whimsical situations in the following manner:—

QUIN,

from his deep, sonorous voice, and weighty manner of speaking, he appointed a watchman;—thus:

"Past twelve o'clock, and a cloudy morning!"

DELANE

was supposed to have lost one eye; therefore he fixed him as a beggar man in St. Paul's churchyard, exclaiming:

"Would you bestow your charity on a poor blind man?"

RYAN,

who was remarkable for oddity and shrillness of voice; he dubbed a razor-grinder.

"Razors to grind! Scissors to grind! Penknives to grind!"

MRS. WOFFINGTON,

though elegant in her person, and very interesting in her face, had, at times, an unpleasant squeaking tone of voice. To this lady he assigned the office of an orange-woman to the theatre:—

"Have some oranges, ladies and gentlemen! or orange chips! Would you have some nonpareils? Have a bill for the play! glass of lemonade! Do have a bill of the play, ladies and gentlemen!"

WOODWARD

puzzled him, he said, to find out any trade he was fit for: he therefore spoke the following speech in his voice and manner from *Sir Fopling Fluster*:—"Wherever I go, there goes a gentleman; upon my life a gentleman; and when you have said *a gentleman*." (here dropping Woodward's voice and manner, and assuming his own), "why you have said *more than is true*."

he was also very severe upon, who was apt to hesitate in his dying scenes; particularly in the fall of Lothario, as thus:

——" adorns my fall,
And che—che—che—cheers my heart in dy—
dy—dy—dying."

In this manner he went through the season, laughing with the audience at the success of this whim; whilst the performers, whom he had mimicked, continued growling and meditating revenge.

In the ensuing spring he produced another piece of the same kind, which he called an Auction of Pictures; and which had as successful a run as the former. In this he introduced several new characters, all popular ones: particularly Sir Thomas de Veil, then the acting justice of peace for Westminster; Cock, the celebrated auctioneer; and the equally famous orator Henley. Neither of the above pieces, though they gave so much entertainment to the public, has been published in our author's works. The first however, *The Diversions of the Morning*, as it was acted at Drury-lane Theatre in its improved state, will be found, with others *hitherto unpublished*, in the Appendix to this volume.

Being now determined to give a more dramatic regularity to his future pieces, his next productions were

a comedy in two acts, called *The Knights*: yet in this, though his plot and characters seem less immediately personal, it was apparent he kept some *real* personages in his view, and the town took upon themselves to assign the resemblance where it appeared most striking. His two principal characters, *Hartop*, in the disguise of *Sir Penurious Trifle*, and *Sir Gregory Gazette*, (the first having the strongest passion for entertaining his friends with stale insignificant stories, and the latter possessed of the most insatiable thirst for news without the least comprehension of politics,) are very strongly painted; particularly the first, which was performed by Foote himself, who, with his usual talent for mimickry, took off (as it was then said) the manners of a certain gentleman in the west of England with uncommon humor and perspicuity.

But what gave the highest *piquancy* to this comedy was the conclusion of it; which consisted of a *feigned* concert of vocal music between *two cats*, in burlesque of the Italian opera. The principal performer in this novel species of entertainment, was a man well known at that time by the name of *Cat-Harris*; and of whom the following anecdote is told, which is too curious to be omitted in this place.

Harris, being engaged to Foote for this purpose, had attended several rehearsals, where his *mewing* gave infinite satisfaction to the manager and the performers. However, on the last rehearsal, Harris was missing; and as nobody knew where he lived, Shuter was prevailed upon to find him out, if pos-

sible. He inquired in vain for some time; at last he was informed that he lived in a certain court in the Minories, but at what house he could not exactly learn. This information was enough for a man of *congenial talents* like Shuter; for, the moment he entered the court, he set up a *cat-solo*, which instantly roused his brother musician in his garret, who answered him in the same tune. "Ho! ho! Are you there, my friend?" said Shuter: "come, come away; the stage waits for us, and we cannot begin the opera without you."

This burlesque had a whimsical and attractive effect for some time; but the manager, foreseeing that it could only be temporary, added a different conclusion to it after the first run, which gave it a more dramatic appearance.

About the close of this season (1748) our author had a very considerable fortune left him by a relation of his mother, which enabled him once more to move in all that splendor of dissipation which was so congenial to his temper. He remained in London for some time, in order to identify this great change of fortune to his friends; and then moved off to the Continent, to add one more English dupe to the intrigues and fripperies of the French nation.*

* This being the *third* fortune left him, he set up a dashing carriage, &c.; and, as emblematical of the event, chose the following motto:

Iterum, iterum, iterumque.

As he held no correspondence with any of his friends during his continuance abroad, the public knew nothing about him; however, their invention (as is usually the case in doubtful matters) was not idle: some said that he had been killed in a duel; others, that he died of a fever, in consequence of his intemperance; whilst others, (who perhaps wished their assertions to be true) positively reported that he was hanged. He disappointed all these tales by his arrival in London in the year 1752 (though he did not make his public appearance till the year afterwards,) bringing with him a comedy of two acts, called *Taste*, which was acted at Druy-lane Theatre that year, and ushered in by the following prologue:—

PROLOGUE TO TASTE.

Written and spoken in the character of an Auctioneer, by MR. GARRICK.

Before this court, I, Peter Puff, appear,
A Briton born, and bred an Auctioneer;
Who, for myself, and eke an hundred others,
(My useful, honest, learned bawling brothers,)
With much humility and fear implore ye,
To lay our present desperate case before ye.
'Tis said, this night a certain wag intends
To laugh at us, our calling, and our friends.
If lords and ladies, and such dainty folks,
Are cur'd of Auction-hunting by his jokes,

Should this odd doctrine spread throughout the land,
"*Before you buy, be sure to understand;*"
Oh! think on us! what various ills will flow,
When great ones only purchase *what they know!*
Why laugh at taste? it is an harmless fashion,
And quite subdues each detrimental passion;
The fair ones' hearts will ne'er incline to man,
Whilst thus they rage for china and japan.
The *Virtuoso* too, and *Connoisseur*,
Are ever decent, delicate and pure;
The smallest hair their loosest thoughts might hold;
Just warm when single, and when married cold:
Their blood at sight of beauty gently flows;
Their Venus must be old, and want a nose;
No amorous passion with deep knowledge thrives;
'Tis the complaint indeed of all our wives.
'Tis said *virtue* to such a height is grown,
All Artists are encourag'd but our own.
Be not deceiv'd?—I here declare on oath,
I never yet sold goods of *foreign* growth;
Ne'er sent commissions out to Greece, or Rome,—
My best antiquities are made at home.
I've Romans, Greeks, Italians, near at hand,
Free Britons all, and living in the Strand;
I ne'er for trinkets rack my pericranium,
They furnish out my room from Herculaneum.
But hush!———
Should it be known, that English are employed,
Our manufacture is at once destroyed:

No matter what our Countrymen deserve;
They'll thrive as ancients, but as moderns starve.
If we should fall, to you it will be owing,
Farewel to arts! They're going! going! going!
The fatal hammer's in your hand, O Town!
Then set us up, and knock the poet down.

The general intention of this comedy, (the profits of which were given by the author to Worsdale the painter, who acted the part of *Lady Pentweazle* with considerable applause, was to ridicule the numerous impositions that persons of fashion and fortune, with their still more ridiculous followers, daily suffer from the tricks and confederacies of painters, picture-dealers, auctioneers, &c. as well as to show the absurdity of giving immense prices for a parcel of maimed busts, effaced pictures, and inexplicable coins, merely because they have the name and appearance of antiquity; while the more perfect, and really valuable performances of the most capital artists of our own age and country (if known to be such,) are totally neglected or despised.

All this the author set forth in a very just, spirited, and humorous light: but whether it was that the generality of the audience did not thoroughly understand this refined satire, or that the pretended *virtuosi* were too much attached to their own infatuations, the piece, though it met with some approbation for a night or two, and was afterwards much approved of by such

ceeding audiences, languished under a cold reception during that season.

He was more fortunate in his next production, which was a comedy in two acts called *The Englishman in Paris*, brought out at Covent-garden theatre, on the 24th of March 1753, for the benefit of Mr. Macklin, and styled, in the bills of that day, *An Answer to a French Farce called 'The Frenchman in London.'* To this he wrote an occasional prologue, (spoken by Mr. and Mrs. Macklin), addressed to the Pit, and an epilogue, which was spoken by Miss Macklin.

In this comedy he exposed the absurdity of sending our youths of fashion abroad, to *improve* themselves in only the vices and follies of neighboring nations. Macklin acted the part of *Buck*; and that of *Lucinda* was expressly written for Miss Macklin, in order to display her qualifications in music, singing, and dancing; in all of which she excelled, and gained universal applause.

In November of the same year Foote himself performed the character of *Buck* at Drury-lane theatre, being his first appearance since his late trip to the Continent. Many idle stories having been circulated relative to him, while he was abroad, Garrick wrote on this occasion a prologue for him, in which he alludes to this circumstance in the following humorous manner:

Amongst the matters that occasion prate,
E'en I sometimes am matter for debate:

Whene'er my faults or follies are the question,
Each draws his wit out, and begins dissection.
Sir Peter Primrose, smirking o'er his tea,
Sinks, from himself and politics, to me.
"Paper! boy."—"Here, Sir, I am."—
"What news to-day?"
"Foote, Sir, is advertised."—"What! run-
away?"
"No, Sir; he acts this week at Drury-lane."
"How's that?" (cries feeble *Grub*): Foote come again?
I thought that fool had done his devil's dance:
Was he not hang'd some months ago in France?"
Upstarts *Mac-bone*, and thus the room harangued:
"'Tis true, his friends gave out that he was hang'd;
But, to be sure, 'twas all a hum; because
I've seen him since; and after that disgrace,
No *Jontleman* would dare to show his face."
To him replied a sneering bonny Scot,
"You reason right, my friend; hang'd he was not;
But neither you nor I can tell *how soon* he'll gang
to pot."
Thus each, as fancy drives, his wit displays;
Such is the tax each son of folly pays.
On this my scheme they many names bestow:
"'Tis fame:"—"'Tis pride:"—nay worse,
"The pocket's low."
I own I've pride, ambition, vanity;
And, what's more strange than these, perhaps you'll see
(Though not so great a portion of it) *Modesty*.

For you I'll curb each self-sufficient thought,
And kiss the rod whene'er you point a fault.
Many my passions are; though one my view:
They all concentre in the pleasing you.—

Towards the close of this year, 1753, Macklin, among other projects, formed a resolution to leave the stage for ever; and for this purpose, on the 20th of December, took a formal leave of the audience, in a prologue written for him by Garrick. The plan of life which he was to adopt, and which he carried into execution, was, to build a tavern in the Piazza, Covent-garden, (which is now known by the name of the Piazza Coffee-house,) where, besides a daily ordinary on a new plan, he was to give, occasionally, evening lectures upon oratory, &c. somewhat in the manner of the famous orator Henley, and of the disputants at the society of the Robin Hood.

The particulars of this strange medley having been already given to the public in various shapes, I shall not repeat them here; except to state, that it called out the talents of Foote, who constantly attended the lectures, and who equally perplexed the orator and delighted the audience by his repeated sallies of wit and humor.

In this respect, at least, the plan proved entertaining to the audience, many of whom resorted to the rooms as much to hear the effusions of Foote, as those of the lecturer. Not satisfied with this triumph, Foote thought his subject fit for a more exalted

exhibition, and accordingly brought out Macklin on the Haymarket boards, in the character of an *Inquisitor*, contending with the celebrated *Dr. Rock* and *Tiddy-doll* for the dignity of the inquisitorial functions and the palm of victory; which, after a long contention, being allowed to Macklin, the entertainment was concluded by a St. Giles' ovation, in imitation of that then exhibiting at Covent-garden in the tragedy of *Coriolanus*.

In return for this stroke, Macklin retorted upon Foote with equal virulence, but less humor. He brought a ridiculous charge against him of robbing his friend of a portmanteau; and in doing this, was by no means sparing of the most coarse and opprobrious terms.

This contest (in which there seemed to be little besides personal abuse) soon disgusted the public: and both the combatants found at the conclusion, that they had bespattered each other without any emolument, or credit to themselves. The Haymarket theatre, after a few nights, found *The Inquisition* very poorly attended; and on the 10th of January, 1755, Macklin's exhibition closed for ever; an event which was followed by his appearing in the Gazette on the 25th of the same month as a bankrupt, in the character of a vintner, coffee-man, and chapman.

Macklin, soon afterwards, returned to the stage, on which he continued for near half a century longer;—and Foote, to the more creditable exertions of his talents as a dramatic writer.

About this period Mr. Murphy began to appear upon the town as a leading critic and dramatic author. From the similarity of their pursuits, and in some respects the congeniality of their talents, he had contracted a close intimacy with Foote; and finding *The Englishman in Paris* succeed so well, he, in imitation of Sir Jon Vanbrugh, (who complimented Cibber's *Love's last Shift*, by writing a sequel to it, called *The Relapse, or virtue in Danger*,) paid the same compliment to Foote, by writing a sequel to his piece, called *The Englishman returned from Paris*.

This he had the frankness to communicate to his *friend* in the summer of 1755, with a developement of his whole plan, plot, characters, &c.; which the other so much approved of, that he *secretly* intented *to make it his own*; and accordingly setting to work upon Murphy's materials, finished a farce of two acts on the same plan, and with the same title, so rapidly, that he brought it out at Covent-garden theatre early in February, 1756.

The surprise and chagrin which Mr. Murphy must have felt on this occasion, may very well be imagined. To have his confidence betrayed by any common acquaintance in the character of a gentleman, must be disagreeable and vexatious; but to be treated by an intimate friend, a brother author, in this glaring and dishonest manner, hurt his feelings in a variety of respects.—Yet what could he do? Foote was a man to be only laughed *at* or *with* through life: it was his privilege, and somewhat in the old character of *court fool*,

individuals found no degradations in submitting to it. Mr. Murphy therefore followed the wiser course, in taking no other public notice of the transaction, than by aiming the following stroke at him, when he brought out his own original *Englishman returned from Paris*, a few months afterwards.

On some doubts being made as to the identity of Sir Charles Buck from Paris, Sir Charles replies, "O yes! I grant you there has been an *impostor* about town, who, with much easy familiarity and assurance, has stolen my writings, &c.; and not only thus treacherously robbed me, but impudently dared to assume my very name even to my face; but I am the true Sir Charles Buck, I can assure you."

This occasioned a warm applause: but the author got little more than this temporary praise for his labor; as Foote's piece had been running with success above two months before at Covent-garden, and thus had deprived this of nearly all its novelty and profits.

Of the merits of the Farce brought out by Foot it may be said, that it has higher pretensions than its predecessor *The Englishman in Paris;* for here John Bull becomes, from a mistaken idea of travelling, a mere frenchified coxcomb, has a detestation for every thing English, and rejects the very woman on this account, now possessed of every advantage, whom before he was rushing headlong into marriage with, destitute of any. It is likewise much more dramatic than the other, and has a greater variety of characters, particularly those of *Crab* and *M'Ruthen*, which are

happily drawn. But after all, much of this praise may probably be ascribed to Mr. Murphy, from whom the piece was, in a great degree, purloined; and who might truly say, as Virgil did to his Roman plagiarist,—

"Hos ego versiculos feci; tulit alter honores. Sic vos non vobis," &c.

Though this must be the opinion of every candid man upon the subject, Foote nevertheless triumphed in the *dexterity*; and by sharing, as author and actor, in the nights when this farce was performed, he derived very considerable solid advantages.

By way of giving still greater variety to the town, he, on his benefit night, this year (which happened on the 8th of march), advertised himself for the part of *Polonius* in *Hamlet*; but afterwards recollecting, as he said himself, "that he had no great talents for a *statesman*," he very disinterestedly resigned his place at court, and gave up the lucrative office of lord chamberlain to Mr. Arthur.

The next season (1757), our hero, with that versatility of character which ever distinguished him, veered to Drury-lane, and brought out at that theatre a new comedy in two acts, called *The Author*. This piece has little or no plot to recommend it; it principally turns on the distressed incident to an author who writes for his daily bread, and on the caricature of a gentleman of family and fortune, who appears ridiculously ambitious of being thought the patron of

arts and sciences. As the Freedom which Foote took with this gentleman's private character forms so leading a feature in his own, I shall make no apology for detailing the following particulars; which at that time made a considerable noise in the theatrical world.

Mr. Aprice (for that was the real name of the gentlemen in question) was a man of fortune and education, and allied to many families of distinction. Foote was among the number of his most intimate acquaintances; an incident which, far from restraining the wantonness of his pen, only served, by furnishing a nearer view of his social and unguarded hours, to give the readiest means of finishing his picture with the greatest exactness.

There were, no doubt, many peculiarities about Aprice, which rendered him an easy subject for the pencil of a caricaturist. "In his person he approached to the larger size; but seemed to be more encumbered by his deportment than his corpulence, which, with a broad unbecoming stare, and awkward style, made him appear to look and walk absurdily. His voice was loud, his manner of speaking boisterous; his words were uttered rapidly and indistinctly, while his head was constantly undulating to his left shoulder, as if to recal what he had inadvertently spoken."*

* Davis' life of Garrick, vol. i. page 182.

Such a striking original could not well be overlooked. Our caricaturist, therefore, had taken him so exactly at all points, that from his first entrance on the stage to his *exit*, he was hailed with the loudest bursts of applause from all parts of the house. The whim of it was increased by seeing Aprice as one of the audience; who, far from resenting, or perhaps at first knowing it, joined in the general laugh at his own portrait.

This farce was performed for a great number of nights to crowded audiences before Mr. Aprice felt the severity of the satire: but at last the joke became so serious, that whenever he went to any public place, the park, play-house, assembly, coffee-house, &c. the name of *Cadwallader* (the hero of the farce) was applied to him, and sounded loud enough to be distinctly heard by every body around; so that even his best friends avoided his approach, for fear of proving witnesses to his being made a public laughing stock.

The veil being now removed from his eyes, he was determined, if possible to get the piece suppressed; and applied to Foote for that purpose; but he, having the laugh and the profits so much on his side, thought proper to disregard these overtures. The gentleman then applied to Mr. Garrick, who at first evaded him; but he remonstrated with so much firmness, that Garrick at last advised him to apply to the Lord Chamberlain for redress. This he immediately did, and obtained from the humanity and politeness of the

Duke of Devonshire, that justice which the original aggressor should have been the first to afford him.

In the spring of the following year Foote visited Ireland, in company with Tate Wilkinson, who afterwards turned out to be so able a coadjutor to him in the line of mimickry. Wilkinson was supposed to be a pupil of his; and, indeed, Foote's own account of him in the character of *Shift*, seems to warrant that opinion: but the following fact, which is stated from the Memoirs of Wilkinson's Life, proves the contrary.

"The last week of Mr. Foote's playing at Drury-lane (previously to his intended trip to Ireland,) he was accidentally with Garrick, Holland, and others, in the green-room. The conversation turned upon imitation; when Garrick said, 'Egad, Foote, there's a young fellow engaged with me, who I think is superior to either of us at *mimickry*. I used to think myself well at it, but I actually give him the preference. 'Tis true, he has tried to resemble me, but that won't do; though Mrs. Garrick says, she is sure he will have me.'—'Indeed!' says Foote, 'I should be glad to see him.'—The result was, Holland was dispatched for Wilkinson; who gave them such a 'spice of his quality' in the mimicking of Barry, Sparks, Woffington, Ridout, Sheridan, and others, that Foote engaged him, with Garrick's permission, to go with him to Ireland, promising at the same time to get him an establishment with Sheridan for the remainder of the season."

While our hero was in Ireland, he produced, with great applause, most of the pieces which he had exhibited in London; particularly *The Diversions of the Morning*, which he enlarged by the introduction of Wilkinson as first pupil to Mr. Puzzle the instructor. In this capacity Wilkinson was received with so much *éclat*, that one night, elated with the applauses which he received from the audience, he ventured on his master, whom he hit off so successfully, that many voices from the pit cried out, "Foote outdone!" Foote was, during this time, in one of the upper boxes, seemingly enjoying the applause of the house, but inwardly feeling all the irritation of offended genius. When the play was over, however, he complimented Wilkinson on his general success; saying, he was very welcome to make free with him, as the *mimic mimicked* was certainly fair game; but this, in the whisper of friendship, he would tell him, "that he thought *his part* was by far the worst imitation of the whole; indeed so bad, that he was afraid it would damn the reputation of the rest."

During Foote's stay in Dublin, he was received not only as a very eminent dramatic writer, but as a man of wit and pleasantry; and as such he was noticed by the Lord Lieutenant and the principal nobility and gentry of the capital, at whose tables he was a constant guest. He always respected the people of Ireland, and spoke of their good humor and hospitality with a kind of congenial delight. His observation likewise led him to examine particularly the charac-

ters of the middling and common classes of people in that country, to whom he often paid this tribute of applause; "that they possessed more native wit and humor than any people of that description whom he had ever met with."

The Dublin stage was, at that time, by no means in the reformed state of the London theatres, and he suggested many alterations for the better; for though the elder Sheridan was in general a good manager, and had many years prior to this period cleansed the *Augean stable* both before and behind the curtain, other irregularites insensibly grew up, arising partly from the natural disposition of the people, and partly from the vanity of the manager. One in particular was, that when the audience were remarkably pleased with any individual passage, they continued applauding (no matter at what state of the play) till the curtain fell, without suffering the whole to be regularly finished.

The absurdity of this custom Foote saw, and felt; he likewise saw that this was a compliment paid almost exclusively to the manager, who accordingly winked at it, through vanity; and therefore one morning at rehearsal, he attempted to cure him of it by the following proposal: "My dear Sheridan," said he, "I have a thought just struck me, which I imagine would relieve you of a great deal of labor and trouble."—"In what manner?" cried Sheridan eagerly; "do inform me, and I shall be much obliged to you."—"Why instead of *Richard the Third*,

can't you play *King Henry* in the same tragedy?"—"Heavens! Mr. Foote, why should I relinquish *Richard*, when you have been often a witness of my getting such universal applause in that part?"—"For that very reason, my dear friend," said Foote; "for if you'll but perform *Henry* instead of *Richard*, the play you know, from the applause you'll get in dying, will finish in the first act, and then we can all go home in good time to supper."—Sheridan affected to laugh at this; but the nuisance was too flattering to his pride to be suppressed, and so it continued, I believe to the close of his management.

Upon the defection of Woodward in 1758, (who had become joint-manager of Crow-street theatre with Barry,) Garrick engaged Foote and Wilkinson, in order to fill up the void which the absence of these great performers, and others who had joined them, occasioned.

The event justified Garrick's precaution; as *The Diversions of the Morning* (which now became a *misnomer* from being performed at *night*,) produced repeated full houses. The *imitations* by Wilkinson were at that time new to a London audience; and as he had closely copied most of the principal performers of Covent-garden theatre, the audience could readily apply the characters.

At the rehearsal of these imitations on the second morning, nothing was talked of in the green-room but the feelings and resentment of the other house; and particularly of Sparks, who had felt the mimickry

so poignantly, that he had taken to his bed, and was dangerously ill. He applied to Garrick for redress; who, in his often convenient, though seemingly embarrassed manner, replied; "Why, hey now, Sparks! to be sure this Wilkinson is a strange kind of fellow; but what can a man do with him? They say he takes me off, and Barry, and Foote; and therefore, my dear fellow! if you are taken off, you see you are brought into very good company."—"That may be so," said Sparks, with becoming sense and feeling; "but let me remind you, Sir, that many a man has been ruined by keeping too good company."

Garrick seemingly felt the force of this remark, and suppressed the imitations for some time: but the audience being encouraged to call for them, they were soon revived with still greater attractions. However, as these imitations implicated most of the principal people of both houses, managers as well as actors, the laugh grew harmless; and, in the end, passed off unnoticed and unrevenged.

Notwithstanding the emoluments which our hero received in his double capacity of performer and sharer in the receipts of the house (which were very considerable,) his economy never kept pace with his revenue. He had no idea of any settled arrangement of expense beyond that of a *pay* and a *receiving pocket*. He generally kept a town and country house, a chariot, horses, servants, &c. with a table mostly occupied by persons of the first distinction for rank and wit; and while his jokes were applauded, and his

hospitality done justice to, *to-morrow* was always left to shift for itself, though that *morrow* often showed an empty purse, which only gave the alarm for fresh resources.

It was in this manner that, early in the February of this year (1759), finding himself under the necessity of raising the ways and means for the remainder of the season, he thought of a trip to Scotland.

The Edinburgh theatre was at this time, in respect to a London emigration, quite a new object. No performer of any consequence would undertake a journey of four hundred miles, to a place where the manager was disabled, by the size of his house and his audience, to hold out any sufficient temptation, and where the highest benefit receipts did not exceed sixty pounds. However, something was to be done. England and Ireland had been already tried to advantage: Scotland remained untouched. He therefore wrote to a Mr. Callender, then the Edinburgh manager, offering his services, and at the same time asking his opinion of the probable success. The manager more than met him half way: he had already heard of Foote's fame; and the novelty of such a performer opening the prospect of a plentiful harvest, he gave him every encouragement to try the experiment.

"Well," said Foote to Wilkinson, on receiving the letter to that purpose, "this Scotch expedition must be risked; but where are the ways and means? I must solicit Garrick, I believe; and yet it vexes

me to the heart to let him assume such a superiority over me even in money matters: but necessity has no law." Garrick accordingly was applied to, next day, for the loan of a hundred pounds, which he readily granted, but (as Wilkinson reports,) in his usual manner of conferring favors: "he would endeavor to see Pritchard, the treasurer, about noon; and *then* he would speak to him about it; and *then* he (Foote) might draw on him in the evening for the sum, leaving a note of acknowledgment for the same."

Though his necessities obliged him to accept this kind of loan, our hero felt all the humiliation of appearing before a play-house treasurer as receiving a boon from the manager. "I cannot ask any gentleman to transact this business," said he, "as I must then betray my poverty; nor can I send my servant, as it would lessen the importance of his master. Do, Wilkinson, oblige me; you are a common friend of both; your interference will tell no secrets; you know already that I am poor, and you equally know that he is mean and avaricious."

Wilkinson immediately complied with this request, and brought him the money in the evening; which so dissipated Foote's chagrin, that he not only feasted upon Garrick's cash, but on his character also, by placing him in a thousand points of ridicule. Among other topics, he brought forward his *poetry*; parts of which he repeated, commenting on them in his usual vein of satire, and concluding, "that poor David's verses were so wretchedly bad, that if he should him-

self die first, he dreaded the thoughts of his (Garrick's) composing his epitaph."*

His trip to Scotland turned out every way fortunate. He was well received not only by the nobility and gentry of that kingdom, but by the public in general; and he returned to town in the May following, with good health and spirits, and a full purse.

After enjoying repose during that summer in London and its vicinity, he wintered for the second time in Dublin; where his own pieces, and Macklin's *Love-à-la-Mode*, brought great receipts to Crow-street theatre. It was here on the 28th of January 1760, after the tragedy of Barbarossa, that he first brought out his (afterwards so much celebrated) comedy of *The Minor*; then a mere skeleton of two acts, without the character of *Smirk* the auctioneer, the epilogue, and other incidental matters which now so much embellish it. Even in that state it was the hobby-horse of the author; who, wherever he went (and he kept the first company in Dublin,) *anticipated* the plan and jokes of this comedy, to the great entertainment of every body who heard them.

The night of exhibition at length arrived, and the house was crowded in every corner with persons of all descriptions, to enjoy this novel piece of fun and humor: but whether methodism was then too well established in Dublin to stand the test of ridicule, or

* Wilkinson's Memoirs.

the humor and characters were too local to be relished, the comedy, after the scene of *Shift* and *Sir William Wealthy*, much disappointed the audience. A kind of lassitude arising from misconception first took place; but when Woodward, who played *Mrs. Cole*, complained of the rheumatism in her hip, his *manner* was thought so indecorous by the boxes, as to create disgust. The rest of the audience followed the hint, and the comedy nearly received its final damnation. It was afterwards given out for a future day, with alterations; but these availed little: so that, after performing it for his benefit on the February following, he withdrew it for that season.

In this piece it is curious to observe how Foote indirectly condemned, by his own example, the propriety of bringing individuals before the bar of the public in a ridiculous and satirical point of view. It has been mentioned in the course of these memoirs, that when Garrick first introduced Wilkinson to Foote, the latter availed himself of the new performer's powers of mimickry, and in some respect took him under his more immediate protection. Wilkinson, sometimes in the ardor of profession, sometimes in his zeal to support a new piece, and sometimes as an offering to the rest of the players, (who smarted under the lash of this personal satire,) would occasionally take off Foote himself. Though for this he had always Foote's permission, or approbation, still it appears that he felt sore in common with others, and even in a much greater degree; for

art which, however disesteemed at present, is by Tully reckoned among the perfections of an orator, mimickry.

Sir Wm. *Why you are deeply read, Mr. Shift!*

Shift. *A smattering. But as I was saying, Sir, nothing came amiss to my master; bipeds or quadrupeds, rationals or animals, from the clamor of the bar to the cackle of the barn-door, all were objects of his imitation, and of my attention. In a word, Sir, for two whole years, under this learned professor I studied and starved, impoverished my body and pampered my mind; till, thinking myself pretty nearly equal to my master, I made one of his own bows, and set up for myself.*

In the above character, which Foote performed himself, he was so far from concealing for whom he designed it, that he took off Wilkinson's voice and manner as nearly as he could; and, lest this should not be sufficient, he had it privately insinuated into the boxes, as well as publicly circulated in the newspapers, that *he* was the man. Wilkinson, in return, not feeling the genealogy of the character to be true, or likely to be believed, laughed, or affected to laugh, at all the other particulars; and in a few years afterwards, (as will be seen in the course of these memoirs,) both parties hiding their animosities in their mutual interests, like old and staunch statesmen proved themselves to be incapable of either lasting love, or hatred.

His trip to Ireland this year, was not by any means so favorable to him as his late excursion to Scotland. He had to divide his profits with Macklin, who brought out his *Love-à-la-Mode* for the first time, as well as with the managers. His sheet-anchor too, *The Minor*, both in its second representation and on his benefit night, failed; from which it happened that on his return to England his finances were so low, that he could not wait the opening of the winter theatres, but beat up for volunteers as well as he could, and commenced his summer campaign at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, with the comedy of *The Minor* in its present improved state.

In retouching this comedy for the English stage, he saw the cause of its original failure, and immediately set about a corresponding alteration. He added the character of *Smirk* the auctioneer; and as he found personality to be always a good ingredient in the success of his pieces, he applied this character to Mr. Langford (successor to Cock the celebrated auctioneer,) and in this capacity told, or invented many humorous anecdotes, which he illustrated with his usual whim and humor. He likewise added the epilogue, spoken by *Dr. Squintum* in the true cant of Whitfield, which gave great relief to the piece; so that with these additions, and the rest of the characters being better known here than in Ireland, the comedy met with quite a different reception. It brought, that season, thirty-eight full houses, and continues to this day a favorite with the public.

while as mimick himself he triumphed, as the object of mimickry he felt a double disgrace.

Years however passed away without this disgrace being in the least resented; and hours and days of conviviality interposed, without the smallest symptoms of animosity. The two parties communicated together without reserve as friends, as men of business, and as familiar companions. But "*ce qui est différé n'est point perdu;*" and Foote delayed his resentment only to make its object pay the more severely for his offence. Finding at last what he thought a proper *niche* for him in his *Minor*, he introduced him under the title of *Shift* in that comedy; a part for the piquancy which, of the writing, as well as for the exhibition of a leading feature in the character of our hero himself, I shall transcribe in this place.

SCENE between SIR WILLIAM WEALTHY and SHIFT.

Sir Wm. *Explain yourself.*

Shift. *You must know then, Sir, that fortune, which frequently delights to raise the noblest structures from the simplest foundations; who from a tailor made a pope, from a gin-shop an empress, and many a prime minister from nothing at all; has thought fit to raise me to my present height from the humble employment of* "Light your honor," *a link boy.*

Sir Wm. *A pleasant fellow this! who were your parents?*

Shift. *I was produced by a left handed marriage (in the language of the news-papers) between an illustrious lamplighter and an eminent itinerant cat and dog butcher, "Cats meat and dogs meat! hearts, livers, lights, or a good sheep's heart!" I dare say you have heard my mother, Sir: but as to this happy pair I owe little beside my being, I shall therefore drop them where they dropped me, in the streets. My first knowledge of the world I owe to a school which has produced many a great man, the avenues of the play house: there, Sir, leaning on my extinguished link, I learned dexterity from pick-pockets, connivance from constables, politics and fashion from footmen, and the art of making and breaking a promise from their masters.*

"Here, Sirrah, light me across the kennel!"—"I hope your honor will remember poor Jack."—"You ragged rascal, I have no halfpence; I'll pay you the next time I see you." But, lack-a-day, Sir, that next time *I saw as seldom as his tradesmen.*

Sir Wm. *Very well.*

Shift. *To these accomplishments from without the theatre, I must add one that I obtained within.*

Sir Wm. *How did you gain admittance there?*

Shift. *My merit, Sir; that, like my link, threw a radiance around me. I moved the compassion of one of the performers, a whimsical man: he took me into his service. My master was remarkably happy in an-*

The author's success on the stage produced almost equal success in public life; as by his taking off, if not with a great degree of exactness, at least with irresistible ridicule, the enthusiastic manner of Whitfield, who was then at the head of the methodists, he seemed more effectually to open the eyes of the deluded followers of that enthusiast, than all the serious writings which had been published against them.—Such is the power of ridicule, properly applied! We will not soberly take advice, because it implies a kind of superiority in the admonisher; but we cannot endure being laughed at, because it throws us into contempt.

The next campaign was remarkable for the reconciliation of our hero's difference with Mr. Murphy on the score of the foul play shown to that Gentleman, in purloining his comedy of *The Englishman returned from Paris*. Foote in his defence could only plead the *itch of plagiarism*, (sometimes so irresistible to writers,) and his general character of eccentricity. This the offended party not only good naturedly excused, but entered into a joint partnership with him for the use of Drury-lane theatre during the summer, which they opened on the 3d of June 1761 with a new comedy written by Mr. Murphy, called *All in the Wrong*.

This comedy was one of the first which established Mr. Murphy's rising reputation. His object was to described the passion of jealousy; and here he has combined in one view, the various effects of it in

domestic life, acting on different dispositions and different tempers, in the various characters of husband and wife, lover and mistress, in a very natural manner, without the least perplexity, or improper embarrassment. Some hints (as he himself confesses in his preface to the printed play) are taken from *Le Cocu Imaginaire* of Molière; but the plot and conduct of it are his own; and as such, continue to support his dramatic reputation to this day. Garrick thought so highly of it, as to compliment the author with the following entertaining epilogue:—

EPILOGUE TO THE COMEDY OF

"ALL IN THE WRONG."

(Spoken by Mrs. Yates.)

BLESS me! this summer work is so fatiguing,
And then our plays so bustling, so intriguing,
Such miffing, sighing, scolding altogether;
These love affairs suit best in colder weather.
At this warm time these writers should not treat you
With too much love and passion, for they heat you.
Poets, like weavers, should, with taste and reason,
Adopt their various goods to every season.
For the hot months, the fanciful and slight;
For mind and body, something cool and light:
Authors themselves indeed neglect this rule;
Dress warm in summer, and in winter cool.

I told our author, that these five-act plays
Were rich brocades, unfit for sultry days:
Were you a cook, said I, would you prepare
Large hams and roasted sirloins for your fare?
The very smoke would pall a city-glutton;
A tragedy would make you all unbutton.
Both appetites now ask for daintier picking;
Farce, pantomime, cold lamb, or white-legg'd chicken.
At Ranelagh fine rolls and butter see!
Signior Tenducci, and the best green tea.
Italian singing is as light as feather;
Beard is too loud, too powerful, for this weather.
Vauxhall more solidly regales the palates;
Good wine, cantatas, cold boil'd beef, and ballads.
What shall we do, your different tastes to hit?
You *(Pit)* relish satire; you *(Boxes)* ragouts of wit;
Your taste *(first Gallery)* is humor, and high season'd joke;
You *(second Gallery)* call for hornpipes, and for "Hearts of Oak."
Oh, could I wish and have! a conjuring man
Once told my fortune, and he charm'd this fan:
Said, with a flirt I might enjoy my wish;
If so, I'll give you, sir, an English dish.
If I like Harlequin have powers o'er men,
I'll flirt and wish, and wish and flirt again.
Come, then; a song! *(flirts, and music is heard:)* indeed! I see 'twill do,
Take heed, gallants; I'll play the deuce with you;

Whene'er I p'ease will charm you to my sight,
And tear a fan with flirting every night.

(SINGERS here enter, and sing the following SONG.)

"YE critics above, and ye critics below,
Ye finer spun critics who keep the mid row,
O! tarry one moment I'll sing you a song,
Shall prove that, like us, you are *all in the wrong*.
Sing tantarara, wrong all, &c.

"Ye poets who mount on the fam'd winged steed,
Of prancing, and wincing, and kicking, take heed;
For when by these hornets, the critics, you're stung,
You're thrown in the dirt, and are *all in the wrong*.

"Ye actors who act what these writers have writ,
Pray stick to your poet, and spare your own wit:
For when with your own, you unbridle your tongue,
I'll hold ten to one you are *all in the wrong*.

"Ye knaves who make news for the foolish to read,
Who print daily slanders the hungry to feed;
For a while you mislead them, the news hunting throng,
But the pillory proves you are *all in the wrong*.

"Ye grave politicians, so deep and so wise,
With your hums, and your shrugs, and your uplifted eyes;

The road that you travel is tedious and long,
But I pray you jog on, you are *all in the wrong*.

"Ye happy fond husbands, and fond happy wives,
Let never suspicion embitter your lives,
Let your prudence be stout, and your faith be as strong;
Who watch, or who catch, they are *all in the wrong*.

"Ye unmarried folks be not bought nor be sold;
Let age avoid youth, and the young one the old;
For they'll soon get together, the young with the young,
And then, my wise old ones, you're *all in the wrong*.

"Ye soldiers and sailors who bravely have fought;
Who honor, and glory, and laurels have brought;
Let your foes but appear, you'll be at them ding dong,
And if they come near you they're *all in the wrong*.

"Ye judges of taste, to our [illegible]bors be kind;
Our errors are many, pray wink, or be blind;
Still find your way hither, to glad us each night,
And our note we will change to, "we're *all in the right*.

Sing tantarara, right all, &c."

The comedies fo *The Citizen* and *The Old Maid*, as new pieces by the same author, followed next, and were both acted on the same night; a species of ar-

rangement not to be generally recommended to authors, for reasons, or rather from prejudices, which the audience are apt to imbibe from the circumstances of the case: for if both pieces are good, the audience, from the satiety produced by the first, cannot always keep their observation sufficiently alive to attend as they ought to do to the second, which therefore is likely to go off at best with indifference: but if the first piece should be condemned, or even disliked, its unprotected brother is presupposed to possess such a family-likeness as to merit the same fate.

This was not, however, exactly the case this night, as *The Old Maid* was rather favorably received: and though *The Citizen* did not meet with that applause which it afterwards received in its more improved state, it passed off pretty well, and had the credit of giving to the stage the afterwards celebrated Miss Elliot, who even then exhibited very promising talents in all the various transitions of Maria.

The last of this summer's theatrical bill of fare, was a novel species of entertainment, founded on the plan of the Italian comedy called *The Wishes*. The hero of this piece is Harlequin, who is a lover and a fine Gentleman, and, according to his usual magic powers, can have every thing he wished for. But in the concluding scene, toying with his mistress on a couch, he wantonly, but unluckily as a form of assevera-tion, "wishes he may be hanged;" which is no sooner said, than a gibbet arises from behind, which, drawing

him by the neck into the air, displays him dangling for some time,—a most unmeaning and disgusting spectacle. Here the audience could hold out no longer; and the piece received a general disapprobation, which continued to the end. It was attempted a second night, to a very thin audience; and again on a third, for the author's benefit, to a much worse; when it ended as *wishes* generally do, in disappointment.

The author, who was then only known by the initials of T. B——, esq.* sent this piece first to Garrick, who very properly rejected it as unfit for representation; which T. B—— esq. and his friends so much resented, that in a printed letter addressed to *himself* during the period of rehearsal, he thus animadverts on the conduct of the Drury-lane manager:

"But that any one who professes himself a man of taste, a lover of the *belles lettres*, a sovereign critic in dramatic performances, and one who is himself a dabbler in the business, should so far forget himself, as to reject a work of so much wit, ingenuity, and inimitable writing, is most surprising."

The fact was, this farrago, from the beginning, was patronized by the late Lord Melcombe (of celebrated *Diary* memory;) who, having been himself an author, and a proficient in the *belles lettres*, collected a party of right honorables and fashionables,

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*Thomas Bently, esq. son of the celebrated Dr. Bentley.

to carry it through at any rate. His Lordship, however, on this occasion experienced a truth, which, I trust, for the honor of the English drama, will never be contradicted:—that the nobler, and what are vulgarly called the higher classes of society, are insufficient in their number, their power, and co-operation of sentiment, to support any particular theatre, or piece, independent of the public; and that it is only the great mass of the people that can finally establish the fate of any theatrical representation.

"The stage but echoes back the public voice."

Upon the whole, the fate of this summer adventure did not turn out to either the manager's or the general expectation. Whether it was that the audience at this theatre "did not choose to be spoken to but by their recorder"* (Garrick,) or that they imagined it would take off the edge of winter amusements, so it happened, that the new generals, however they might have deserved, could not command success, and the campaign broke up with a silent determination on each side to act singly in future, which better answered the expectations of both in their different departments.

Foote, on his part, hastened to make amends for his disappointment, by bringing out at Covent-garden theatre, so early as the month of January

* Richard III.

following, a comedy of three acts called *The Liar;* which, though not so well received as it has since been, when cut down to two acts, brought both profit and reputation to the author.

The origin of this comedy will be found in *The Menteur* of Corneille, and in Sir Richard Steele's *Lying Lovers;* yet on these foundations Foote has contrived to raise so pleasing a superstructure, as to give the whole an air of novelty, which, by the laws of the drama, may fairly entitle the piece to be called his own, more particularly in the parts of *Young Wilding*, and *Papillon.* The former of these characters Foote at first performed himself; but, from a clumsiness of person, and an exuberance of *grotesque*, failed in giving that easy, familiar, unabashed manner, which so happily distinguished the late John Palmer. It was, to the last, so much one of that actor's master pieces, that the part seems to languish in the hands of his successors.

Following the same track with perseverance, our hero brought forward at the Haymarket theatre, in the following summer, a new piece of three acts, called *The Orators;** the design of which was to expose the prevailing passion for oratory, the affair of the supposed Cock-lane ghost, and the debating society held at the Robin Hood.

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* *The Orators* was first performed at noon, in ridicule of Sheridan, who was then giving his lectures with great success.

In working up these materials, some real characters were to be sacrificed; and as Dr. Johnson was said to be partly a believer in the Cock-lane ghost, he was looked upon as a proper object for the purpose. This secret was not so well kept as to prevent it from coming to the ears of Johnson, who made an immediate determination. He employed a friend to buy for him one of the stoutest oak cudgels that could be procured in town, and at the same time caused it to be made known both to the author and to the public, that he intended "to plant himself in the front of the stage-box on the first night of representation; and if any buffoon attempted to take him off, or treat him with any degree of personal ridicule, to spring forward on the stage, knock him down in the face of the audience, and then appeal to their common feelings and protection."

This rough declaration, and the well known character of Johnson for keeping his word, softened the rigor of our modern Aristophanes. He now thought it would be safer to relinquish the tyger for the lamb; and therefore took up, in exchange, the late George Faulkner, printer of the Dublin Journal, a man who had nothing to recommend him to the "fixed finger of Scorn" but a long life of industry, integrity, and hospitality, unoffending manners, and the misfortune of having lost a leg. It is true he had some trifling peculiarities of manner about him; but as these were attended with no vices, they ought to have been considered as pardonable weaknesses, demanding

rather indulgence than reprobation. Yet such is the propensity of human nature for personal scandal, that the comedy was principally supported by this character; and crowded audiences were found repeatedly roaring at a few common-place stories, told in a ridiculous manner by a man hopping upon one leg.*

Our hero having now confined his exertions to the Haymarket theatre, produced in the following summer (1763) his celebrated comedy of *The Mayor of Garrat*. This piece, being intended to ridicule some particular characters in the militia, (which he has admirably done in the character of major Sturgeon,) was thought by several of his friends, previously to representation, a bold attempt. They remonstrated, with a proper caution, "that however an audience may laugh at the peculiarities of an individual, the case was widely different when the ridicule in a great degree attached to themselves; that the militia was a body of citizens, raised for the general defence of the nation, in which *all* were concerned, and which it was apprehended, *all* might resent. But against this objection he had defended himself by only selecting such *outré* characters as militia-men themselves

* Faulkner soon found ample revenge in the dispensation of Providence; as in less than four years afterwards Foote broke his leg, in consequence of a fall from his horse, and thus realized that part of the joke in his own person. For further particulars, see the Appendix.

would join in ridiculing; and when a simple fishmonger was exhibited with the rank of a major, aping all the gallantries of a lover and a hero, the laugh was universal, and the comedy met with a success much superior to any of his former.

It should be here remarked, that the militia was in a very different state *then* from the condition of that body of forces, and of our volunteer corps, at *present*. They were then as poorly drilled as they were indifferently and irregularly clothed; and had none of that *esprit de corps* which now so much assimilates them to the standing army, and which ranks them as a body of disciplined warriors. A little harmless ridicule therefore was allowable; particularly as the peace of 1763 was just then concluded, when, in the language of the major, the "*seddunt army tuggy*"* acquired additional force.

The receipts produced by this comedy recruited our hero's finances so powerfully, that as his purse was generally the barometer to his spirits, he dashed into all kinds of higher extravagance. He made alterations both in his town and country house, enlarged his hospitalities, and laid out no less a sum than 1200*l.* in a magnificent service of plate. When he was reminded by some friends of these extravagancies, and particularly the last, he turned it off by saying, "he acted from a principal of economy; for

* *Cedant arma togæ.*

as he knew he could never keep his *gold*, he very prudently laid out his money in *silver*, which would not only last longer, but in the end sell for nearly as much as it originally cost."

This season was likewise remarkable for terminating the dispute between Foote and Wilkinson, which had now continued for nearly five years; and from the provocation on the part of the former, was thought to be irreconcilable. The offender made the first advances, by sending a plenipotentiary to Norwich, where Wilkinson then was, offering him not only a *carte blanche* in his professional business, but his friendship, house, and table. Wilkinson, not preferring any quarrel to his interest, and perhaps making the proper allowances for so peculiar and whimsical antagonist, acceded to these proposals; and soon after joined him in town, where the truce continued with uninterrupted harmony to the death of Foote.

At the same time that he wrote to Wilkinson on this subject, our hero commissioned him to re-engage Weston; who, though then not generally known, was perceived by so good a judge as Foote, to be a very necessary man to support him in the particular line of his profession. Weston more than outran the most sanguine expectations of his patron; by not only playing the characters assigned him with infinite comic humor, but suggesting to the manager the ideas of writing for him such others as Weston himself judged would best suit his abilities. Indeed he was upon the whole so *unique* an actor, that not to

give him a particular place in any work touching upon the dramatic history of his time, would be doing injustice to his memory, as well as withholding an example which may be useful to mankind.

Thomas Weston was the son of Thomas Weston, head cook to King George the Second; which lucrative though menial employment, enabled him to give his son a good education, intending him for one of the liberal professions. With this view too he got his son early appointed a turnbroach, and soon afterwards an under clerk, in the king's kitchen, both which offices he performed by deputy. But the young man's genius pointed to other destinations. The stage principally drew his attention; and hence he spent most of his time either at the theatres, or those public-houses in the neighborhood which are frequented by the inferior heroes of the sock and buskin. He likewise became a member of one of the spouting clubs, which afforded a great range of amusement for stage-struck tyros at that time; and, in short, showed such a strong, evident partiality for this line, that his father, in order to put a sudden stop to his dramatic pursuits, entered him as a midshipman on board the Warspite man of war, then under the command of the late Sir John Bently. But *Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.* Weston's genius triumphed over his father's determinations; as soon after he was stationed on board this ship he contrived to run away; and, being afraid to meet his father after this conduct, he entered into one of the strolling companies of the

north, where he experienced all those strange vicissitudes of life which are so peculiarly incident to that situation.

About the year 1760 he was introduced to the Haymarket theatre and there played the insignificant character of *Dick*, in *The Minor*; but even in this little part Foote saw his merit, and would have assigned him a proper situation in the company, had not his rambling disposition carried him off to Ireland, where his talents disclosing themselves more fully, he appeared to considerable advantage in the following characters: *Sharp*, in *The Lying Valet*; *Cymon*, in *Damon and Phillida*; the *Old Man*, in *Lethe*; *Daniel*, in *The Conscious Lovers*; the *Clown*, in *Measure for Measure*; and many other characters in that line of performance.

From Ireland he strolled to Norwich; where, from his performing so trivial a part as the *Gentleman Usher*, in *The Rehearsal*, and others almost of equal insignificance, he seems, owing to some unaccountable circumstance, to have sunk in the public estimation. Fortune at last provided him his proper place, by transplanting him to the very hot-bed where his genius was most likely to thrive, under the care of the hero of these Memoirs.

His first principal appearance in the Haymarket was in the character of *Jerry Sneak* in the then new comedy of *The Mayor of Garrat*; and though the manager himself expressed infinite humor and discrimination in *Major Sturgeon*,

the subdued hen-pecked temper of *Jerry*, which was so visible in every feature and movement of Weston, divided the applause. In short, no man could have previously written up to such acting: it was one of those lucky aids which authors sometimes receive from actors, when the pen is obliged to yield to the superior powers of personation.

His fame being thus established, he appeared as a principal in all the managers's subsequent, as well as in most of his preceding pieces. Foote accurately studied the force of Weston's powers, and wrote for them; which the other repaid by so faithful a representation, as to produce both profit and reputation to the theatre.

From the Haymarket, he occasionally engaged at the winter theatres; and at Drury-lane obtained such marked applause in *Abel Drugger*, in *The Alchymist*, that Garrick, who was himself almost matchless in the part, presented him with a bank note of 20*l.* at his benefit, accompanying it with this declaration, "that it was one of the finest pieces of acting he ever saw."

To speak correctly of Weston's uncommon powers, is rather difficult; as there was not in his time, nor has there been since, any comedian directly in his line. Nokes, towards the close of the reign of Charles the Second, appears to be the only one who can with justice be ranged by the side of Weston; and to him, indeed, he seems to have left his mantle exclusively of all others.

In summing up his dramatic character, it may be said that he was an actor of a very different genius from any that was seen long before or since his time; and yet this general excellence may be comprehended in one article; namely, a plain and palpable simplicity of nature. Shuter had a richness of coloring in his comic characters, that was pleasant but often wrong. Yates was generally chaste and correct, but he often carried this quality to a degree of coldness which threw a damp on the performance; but Weston united taste and humor in so eminent a degree, that when he raised his audience seemingly to the highest pitch of laughter, his features became the graver and steadier. Nature in him appeared to be simply performing her part, independent of any artificial aid, any audience, any applause, or any exterior exciting causes.

His *by-play* too was in the most capital style of excellence. Who that remembers his surprise at breaking the phial in *Abel Drugger*; his returning for his shoes, after his medical examination in *Doctor Last*; or his hurrying up his wife's night clothes, on the well-known sound of "Jerry, Jerry, where are you, Jerry?" in *The Mayor of Garrat*; but must have a picture before them of such superior excellence, that they may well despair of ever "seeing its like again?"

With those peculiar powers which would have raised him, in the ordinary habits of prudence, to a respectable degree of independence, he had drawbacks in his passions, which levelled him to the ground. He was

from his boyish days attached to low, pleasurable company; whence though mirth and a partial knowledge of nature may sometimes be extracted, they are generally purchased at too great a price. It induces a habit of idleness and dissipation; and this last vice Weston acquired in so great a degree, that he was seldom sober. When his midnight companions were occasionally not to be found, the brandy-bottle was always near him; and to this he adhered so closely and unremittingly, that he soon destroyed his constitution, and died, on the 18th of January 1776, a miserable example of thoughtlessness and intoxication.

Having anticipated the regular progress of our hero's memoirs, with a view of giving a previous sketch of this celebrated character, we now return to the year 1764; which Foote, strengthened by the addition of Wilkinson and Weston, took the field in great force for the theatrical campaign. His first piece in this summer was a comedy of three acts, called *The Patron;* which, though not the most successful of his dramas, sets his taste and knowledge in a very conspicuous light.

The object of this little entertainment is to ridicule those pretenders to wit and learning, who, assuming, from their rank in life a character of patronage to which they are in no way entitled, encourage a set of artists as contemptible as themselves, for the sake of the incense offered at the shrine of their vanity. The character of *Rust* the antiquarian was played by Weston, with infinite drollery and chasteness of exhibition;

and the making him fall in love with a beautiful young Lady because the tip of her ear resembled that of *Poppæa*, was a happy incident of ridicule. *Sir Peter Pepperpot*, a rich West India merchant, who is constantly giving an account of his barbecues and turtle-feasts; with a miserable poet, and a low Moorfields bookseller; from the whole group of this pleasing comedy.

The Patron, considered in a political point of view, is certainly one of the best of Foote's pieces; but not being supported by any *personality* (though some guessed it to be directed at the character of the late Lord Melcombe), it was not received with those bursts of applause, so common to his higher-seasoned entertainments. It wanted that "drachm of base" which, however Foote may be censured for using it on the stage, the public were equally guilty in demanding; for by their setting so high a price on this contraband trade, they evidently encouraged the manufacture. The author, however, thought so highly of this comedy, that in a dedication of it to the late Marquis of Strafford, he speaks of it as, "in his own estimation, the best that he had then written."

The comedy of *The Commissary* was the produce of the next season; which was a well-timed piece of ridicule on the commissaries and army contractors of what is commonly called "the seven years' war." Supposing these men in general to have sprung from nothing into the possession of great fortunes, great houses, and splendid establishments; the author shows,

in a very ridiculous point of view, the means of their acquiring modern manners and accomplishments: as their receiving different lectures upon oratory, dancing, fencing, and riding the great horse, all in one morning; and then complaining, in the language of a laboring mechanic. "What a difficult thing it was to become a gentleman!"

We have hitherto seen our hero, with very few exceptions, on the full tide of prosperity; the period now seemed to have approached, not only of diverting this stream from its usual course, but of drying up for ever its springs of wit and humor.—He had been on a visit at Lord Mexborough's very early in the year 1766, accompanied by his Royal Highness the late Duke of York, Lord Delaval, Sir Francis Blake Delaval, and others; when some of the party, wishing to have a little fun with this prince himself of all fun and humor, purposely drew him into a conversation on horsemanship. Foote, who had on most occassions a strong spice of vanity about him, boldly asserted, "that although he generally preferred the luxury of a post-chaise, he could ride as well as most men he ever knew." They urged him to a trial next morning at the chace; when, mounting him on a high-spirited mettlesome horse of the Duke of York's, he soon paid forfeit for his temerity; for he had scarcely set spurs to the sides of the animal, when he was thrown with such violence to the ground, as to fracture one of his legs in two places.

The joke now becoming more serious than they had expected, he was carried back to Lord Mexborough's house; and every possible attention was paid him by the Duke of York's surgeon, in order to save the limb, but in vain. He was obliged at last to submit to amputation; which was performed so skilfully, that except the necessity of using a cork leg, he felt ever afterwards as little inconvenience as could possibly result from such an accident.

His friends thought he would not be philosopher enough to bear up under such a misfortune; but they were deceived. Whether he rallied *en force* on this occasion; or whether supported by the presence of his royal patron, who showed him every kind of solicitude; he was ashamed to let his usual spirits flag. He was himself the first to advise amputation, when he found that the surgeons doubted on the necessity of the case; and both before and after it was performed, turned his jokes upon his own situation, as, he observed, "he was then prevented from jesting with other people."

While matters were preparing for the operation, he requested that he might be dealt with indulgently, as it was the first time of his performance in the character of a *Patientee*; and after the first dressings were over, and his surgeons gave him hopes of a speedy recovery, he said "he had now no fears of corns, sores, or gibed heels; that he would not change his one good leg with Lord Spindle's two drum-sticks; and though

to be sure he might find himself a little awkward at running, yet he would hop with any man in England."

In short the blood which invigorated the lost limb, seemed to return in fuller tides to his heart, and give him an unusual flow of spirits; so that his friends were obliged to forbid him such a frequency of conversation, as well as prevent the access of visitors, till the attendance of the faculty was no longer necessary.

In a short time he recovered from this misfortune much better than most people had expected; as, with the help of a cork leg exactly fitted to the other, he was able to play most, if not all of his characters, as well as before. In some respects indeed his misfortune seemed to prove an actual advantage to him; as he used to avail himself of the trifling halt in his leg, to heighten the humor of the character.

His Royal Highness the Duke of York took care, likewise, to alleviate this accident by every instance of kindness in his power; and, among other good offices, he obtained for him in the July following, a royal patent to erect a theatre in the city and liberties of Westminster, with a privilege of exhibiting dramatic pieces there, from the 14th of May to the 14th day of September, during his natural life.

This was giving him a fortune at one stroke; which our author knew how to avail himself of, by immediately purchasing the old premises in the Haymarket (which he had hitherto rented from the executors of Potter the carpenter, who built it in the year 1720), and erecting a new theatre on the same ground.—

This house he opened in the May following 1767, with a new introductory piece called *The Prelude*,* in which he recited with some pleasantry his late misfortune, complimented the munificence of his royal patron, and trusted, for the remuneration of all his cares and expences, to the protection and favor of the public.

On the 2d of July in the same year, a new mock-heroic tragedy, called *The Tailors*, was performed at this theatre; but as this piece was not of his own writing, it will be necessary to give a more detailed account of it; particularly as it was both well received by the public, and much approved of by the best critics of that day.

A little before this time their had been great disputes in London between the master-tailors and their journeymen, so as to create a serious alarm among the beaux and changelings of fashion, as well as to become a general town talk. Some anonymous writer, seeing this a good subject for a mock-heroic, and conceived a plot similar to that of Garth's Dispensary, formed upon it this tragedy, which in reality possessed a singular degree of merit. It was sent to the manager from Dodsley's (the bookseller) shop for perusal, with an intimation, "that if he liked it he was at liberty to use it; if not, to return it in the same secret manner in which it came to him."

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* See the appendix, at the end of the second volume.

The manager was too good a judge of humor to let such a genuine *morceau* escape him. He immediately sent a letter to the author, acknowledging the receipt of his tragedy, and assuring him it should be put into rehearsal the very first opportunity: he at the same time wrote a letter to Wilkinson on the subject; from which, as it explains his opinion of it more fully, I shall subjoin the following extract:

"I have a piece of three acts, not my own, which I shall give in the month of May or June next called *The Tailors*. The subject is a rich one, the dispute between the masters and the journeymen of that respectable profession. It is a parody of the best passages in the most favorite plays; conveyed, with great gravity, in blank verse. I think you will appear in it to advantage, and I shall be glad of your assistance. I cannot say I am quite so well as I had reason to expect. I thought myself obliged to give Barry a lift, two critical nights, which injured me extremely; but I am now better, and, except the trifle of a leg, as much yours as ever.

Nov. 3. "SAM. FOOTE."

On the 7th of July, 1767, this tragedy came out; The manager taking a principal part himself, which he executed with an uncommon spirit of serious ridicule. The other parts were likewise well distributed; and the whole was introduced to the public by the following pleasant prologue, written by Garrick.

PROLOGUE TO "THE TAILORS."

(Spoken by Mr. Foote.)

THIS night we add some heroes to our store,
Who never were as heroes seen before.
No blustering Romans, Trojans, Greeks, shall rage;
No knights, arm'd *cap-à-pie*, shall crowd our stage;
Nor shall our Henries, Edwards, take the field,
Opposing sword to sword, and shield to shield:
With different instruments our troop appears;
Needles to thimbles shall, and sheers to sheers,
With parchment gorgets, and in buckram arm'd,
Cold blooded tailors are to heroes warm'd,
And slip-shod slide to war. No lion's glare,
No eye balls darting fire shall make you stare:
Each outside shall bely the stuff within,
A Roman spirit in a tailor's skin.
A cross-legg'd Cassius, Pompey, shall you see,
And the *ninth part of* Brutus strut in me.
What though no swords we draw, no daggers shake;
Yet can our warriors a "quietus make
With a bare bodkin." Now be dumb ye railers,
And never but in honor call out "Tailors!"—
"But are those heroes tragic?" you will cry:
Oh, very tragic; and I'll tell you why.
Should female artists with the male combine,
And mantua-makers with the tailors join;
Should all, too proud to work, their trades give o'er,
Not to be softened with the *six-pence more*;

What horrors would ensue! First you ye *beaus*,
At once lose all existence with your clothes!
Then you, ye fair, where would be your defence?
This is no golden age of innocence.
Should drunken Bacchanals the Graces meet,
And no police to guard the naked street,
Beauty is weak, and passion bold and strong:
Oh! then,—but modesty restrains my tongue.
May this night's bard a skilful tailor be;
And like a well made coat his tragedy!
Though close, yet easy; decent but not dull;
Short, but not scanty; without buckram full.

The manager strengthened his company this season by the reinforcement of Mr. and Mrs. Barry; whose tragic performances, mixed with his light summer humor, afforded the public a dramatic alternation to which they had been totally unused at this theatre.

Barry had been nearly ten years absent from the London stage, on an excursion to Ireland; where, for the sake of wielding an insubstantial truncheon as joint manager with Woodward, he lost much of the prime of life in his profession, as well as what money he might have saved by adhering to his designation here. Thus "shorn of his fortune," but in the meridian of his powers, he arrived in London, the season before, accompanied by Mrs. Dancer, afterwards the celebrated Mrs. Barry; and, not waiting for the return of the winter season, he opened the Opera-house in the Haymarket, with the tragedy of *Othello*,

which was afterwards followed up by most of his principal characters.

His long absence made him almost new to the stage; and the long disuse of *Othello*, for want of a competent performer, caused that tragedy to be almost equally new to the public: but when they saw the part filled by so commanding a figure, and with such fascinating powers of expression, they hailed him as not only the restorer of Shakespeare in this play, but as the leading star of his profession. The critics confirmed the public taste; and the Opera-house became for that summer the resort of the gay, the fashionable, and the scientific world.

Foote not only saw all this, but, feeling it to his cost, engaged Mr. and Mrs. Barry for the next season at his own theatre; thus silencing a powerful opposition, and forming an alliance at once both lucrative and respectable.

At the close of the season, the Barrys went off to Drury-lane, where they had a fixed engagement under Garrick; while the manager of the Haymarket, in order to make up for this great theatrical defection, was obliged to have recourse to his own mental powers. They were propitious to his call; as, early in the summer of 1768, he produced that now well-known and established comedy of *The Devil upon Two Sticks*.

This excellent little piece, though it admits of some *temporary* strokes, such as the ridicule on the college of physicians, the political doctor, &c.; yet exhibits

them worked up in so brilliant and general a manner as to be always new, and sure of continuing to be relished while there is demand for public satire. It has likewise (what many of his other pieces want) a regular fable interwoven with the incidents, and does not so much depend upon single and detached scenes.

The receipts of this comedy exceeded his most sanguine expectations. There was little or no demand for any variation in the theatrical bill of fare during the whole season; so that it alone was said to have produced him between three and four thousand pounds. Twelve hundred pounds of this sum he lodged at his banker's, as a deposit for future contingencies; beside five hundred in cash, which he intended to take over with him to Ireland, where he was engaged for the ensuing winter.

His usual *dæmon* of extravagance, however, still haunted him; for, taking Bath in his way to Holyhead, the September following, he fell in with a nest of gamblers (the usual attendants on this fashionable place of resort), who, finding him with full pockets and high spirits, availed themselves of their superior dexterity with considerable success. Several of the frequenters of the rooms saw this, but it was too common a case for private interference; besides, friendship is not the usual commerce of watering places. At last his friend Rigby,* who happened then to be at Bath,

* The Right Hon. Richard Rigby, then paymaster of the forces.

took an opportunity to tell him how grossly he was plundered; and further remarked, "that from his careless manner of playing and betting, and his habit of telling stories when he should be minding his game, he must in the long run be ruined, let him play with whom he would."

Foote, who perhaps by this time had partly seen his error, but was too proud to take a lesson in the character of *a dupe*, very ridiculously and ungratefully resented this advice. He told his friend with an unbecoming sharpness, "that although he was no politician by profession, he could see as well as another into any sinister designs laid against him; that he was too old to be schooled; and that as to any distinction of rank between them to warrant this liberty, he saw none; they were both the king's servants, with this difference in *his* favor,—that he could always draw upon his talents for independence, when perhaps a courtier could not find the king's treasury always open to him for support."

On receiving this return, Rigby, as may be well imagined, made his bow, and walked off; while *the dupe* went on, and not only lost the five hundred pounds which he had about him, but the twelve hundred at his banker's; and thus, stripped of his last guinea, was obliged to borrow a hundred pounds to carry him to Ireland.

Fortune, however, who was constantly at his heels (though he so often turned her out of doors), veered

about once more in his favor on his arrival in Dublin; for his new comedy of *The Devil upon Two Sticks* did nearly as much for him there as on the boards of the Haymarket. It brought crowded houses every night to the end of the season; the treasury books constantly reporting from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds per night; which, as the expenses of the house were small, and he himself played also upon shares, made his profits very considerable.

He was no less lucky in being under the patronage of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the present Marquis Townshend, who knew and valued him for talents so congenial to his own. His Excellency not only commanded this comedy several times during the winter, but invited the facetious author to court; where by his wit and sprightly conversation, he ingratiated himself so much with the Irish nobility and gentry (those legitimate sons of gaiety and good humor), that he soon became as great an attraction at the castle as at the theatre.

Thus recovered in his finances, and further established in his reputation, on his return to London in the spring of 1769 he gave his muse a *fallow* season. One new piece, however, was produced at this theatre in this year (written by the late Isaac Bickerstaff), called *Doctor Last in his Chariot*, as a kind of sequel to *The Devil upon Two Sticks*, and partly taken from *The Malade Imaginaire* of Molière. This little entertainment, though it owned the same father as *Love in a Village*, and was ushered in by a very hu-

morous prologue, written by Garrick and spoken by Foote, was very nearly damned the first night: but by alterations, and the support of friends, it dragged on its feeble existence to the ninth, "and then was heard no more." The general business of the theatre, however, succeeded; and as the manager had more time than usual upon his hands, he enjoyed the *otium cum dignitate* at North End, upon an enlarged scale; holding out the strongest excitements to good society, entertainment for both mind and body.

Towards the close of the present summer, an event occurred which engrossed the attention of all *amateurs* of the drama. This was no less than the intended celebration of a jubilee at Stratford upon Avon, in honor of the memory of our immortal Shakspeare. But as the origin of this grand fête is not generally known, or but imperfectly remembered, and many details were never recorded, it belongs to the plan of these Memoirs to relate them; particularly as they gave rise to a difference between our hero and Garrick, which might have had very disagreeable consequences.

Some time previously to the celebration of this jubilee, a certain clergyman had purchased a property in and about the town of Stratford, in which the house and grounds where Shakspeare resided were included. In the garden belonging to this house was a remarkable mulberry tree planted by Shakspeare's own hands, and which the inhabitants looked up to with a kind of religious veneration. The purchaser, however,

finding this tree overshadowed his house, and neither dreading the wrath of the offended Muses, nor himself possessing any reverence for our great dramatic bard, one unlucky night most sacrilegiously cut it down.

The alarm of this atrocious deed soon spread throughout the town and the adjacent village. Not the extinction of the vestal fire at old Rome, nor the stealing of the *Palladium* from Troy, could have struck with more grief and astonishment the ancient inhabitants of those places respectively, than were now occasioned in the neighborhood in question. The men, women, and children, of the town of Stratford, gathered round the house in successive crowds, beheld the fallen tree with sighs and tears, and almost vowed to sacrifice the offender to the injured manes of the immortal planter. In short, such a tumultuous spirit of revenge was excited, that the culprit very prudently quitted the town at once; and the inhabitants came to a resolution, "never to admit any of the same family, or even of the same name to reside among them."

The mulberry tree was instantly purchased by a carpenter in the neighborhood: who cut it up, and retailed it, in relics of various shapes; as stand-dishes, tea-chests, medallions, &c. Of these the corporation of Stratford secured the best part; and in a handsome box, made of this wood, they enclosed the freedom of that town to Mr. Garrick, with the following letter, written by their steward:—

To David Garrick, Esq.

Sir,

THE corporation of Stratford, ever desirous of expressing their gratitude to all who do honor and justice to the memory of Shakspeare, and highly sensible that no person in any age hath excelled you therein, would think themselves much honored if you would become one of their body. Though this borough now doth not send members to parliament, perhaps the inhabitants may not be the less virtuous; and to render the freedom of this place the more acceptable to you, the corporation propose to send it in a box, made of that very mulberry tree planted by Shakspeare's own hand.

The story of that valuable relic is too long to be here inserted: but the gentleman who is so obliging as to convey this to you, will acquaint you therewith; as also, that the corporation would be happy in receiving from your hands some statue, bust, or picture of Shakspeare, to be placed within their new town-hall. They would be equally pleased to have some picture of yourself that the memory of both may be perpetuated together in that place which gave him birth, and where he still lives in the mind of every inhabitant.

I am Sir, yours, &c.

The honor here proposed to be conferred on Mr. Garrick, was readily accepted by him; and in the month of May following, the persons deputed by the corporation presented him with the freedom of their borough, accompanied with the following letter:—

To David Garrick, Esq.

Sir,

THE mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, of the ancient borough of Stratford upon Avon,—a town that glories in giving birth to the immortal Shakspeare, whose memory you have so highly honored, and whose conceptions you have so happily expressed,—rejoice in an opportunity of adding their mite to that universal applause your inimitable powers have most justly merited; and, as a mark of their esteem and gratitude, have respectfully transmitted to you the freedom of their borough in a box made from the mulberry tree undoubtedly planted by Shakspeare's own hand, which they hope you will do them the honor of accepting.

By order of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses in common council.

(Signed) W. Hunt,
Town Clerk.

Stratford upon Avon,
May 3, 1769.

This flattering and distinguished compliment first suggested to Garrick the idea of a Jubilee: which met the approbation not only of the *literati*, but of the public at large, as no sooner was the time fixed for its celebration, than every one within a hundred miles of the place, who was not prevented by pressing circumstances, prepared for attending this august and classical fête. All summer journeys to friends, all trips to watering places, were for a while suspended; while

"Avon's banks, where flowers eternal blow,"

formed the great resort of all.

Foote, as a professional man and an *amateur*, could not resist mixing in this motley throng; but, either from envy of Garrick's taking the lead in this business, or from thinking that he conducted it with too much vanity and self-ostentation, our hero looked with a jealous eye upon the whole, and hence took every little occasion, in squibs, sarcasms, and *bon-mots*, to arraign the projector's taste and management.

This conduct, however, passed off with a laugh on both sides, till the winter following; when, finding that Garrick meant to convert his jubilee into an object of profit, by bringing out a representation of it on the stage, Foote's spleen could be retained no longer. He played off his powers of ridicule on every part of the subject, both in company and in the public papers; particularly on the *Ode on Erecting a Statue to*

Shakspeare, in which he pointed out some errors and inaccuracies with such force and humor, as gained the greatest part of the laughers on his side.

He carried his satire still further; for, finding that the entertainment of *The Stratford Jubilee* ran to ninety nights that season, his jealousy became so strong, that he intended to bring out a mock procession in imitation of it, and introduce Garrick himself on the stage as the principal figure. In this procession, a man was to be dressed out so as to resemble Garrick as much as possible, in the character of *Steward of the jubilee*; with his wand, white-topped gloves, and the mulberry tree medallion of Shakspeare hanging at his breast; while some ragamuffin in the procession should address him in the well-known lines of the jubilee poet-laureat:

> "A nation's taste depends on you,
> Perhaps a nation's virtue too;"

to which he was to make no other answer, but clap his arms, like the wings of a cock, and crow out,

Cock-a-doodle-doo!

Garrick had early intelligence of his whole scheme, and the uneasiness which he felt upon the occasion could not be dissembled. He dreaded public ridicule as the most painful of all misfortunes; and in the hands of such a man as Foote, he apprehended the

decay, perhaps the ruin, of that reputation which was ever dear to him, and which he had been raising for so many years. However, suddenly this mighty project fell to the ground. The parties met, as if by accident, at the house of a nobleman, the common friend of both; when, alighting at the same time from their chariots at his lordship's door, and exchanging significant looks at each other, Garrick broke silence first by asking, "Is it war or peace?"—"Oh! peace, by all means," said the other, with much apparent good will; and the day was spent in great cordiality.

The private reason of this sudden reconciliation has never yet been generally known. Davis, in his Theatrical Memoirs, is of opinion, that it was occasioned, either by a well-timed gratification on the part of Garrick, or a threat of retaliation in kind on his antagonist: but Davis was rather intent on doing homage to the memory of his departed master, for the sake of getting subscribers to his book, than on doing even common justice to the character of Foote, who, in his lowest declensions of fortune, was well known to have a spirit above the first of these compromises; and as to the other, I believe nothing would have given him greater pleasure, than a contest of ridicule with Garrick, in which point he was so conscious of his own superiority. The fact was (and it is here related from very good authority), that the late Marquis of Stafford, the mutual friend of both, seeing Garrick so very unhappy about this menaced

caricature, prevailed upon Foote to abandon the design; and the accidental meeting at this nobleman's house, was the settled signal for accommodation.*

Having thus got rid of this troublesome affair (which, however successful, would not have done much credit to either his talents or private character), he once more resumed his pen, and in the summer of 1770 produced a new comedy called *The Lame Lover*. The principal character *(Sir Luke Limp)*, there is reason to believe, was partly intended as a piece of drollery on his own misfortune; but this was worked up with other ingredients of vanity and gallantry, which rendered it a proper object of ridicule. *Serjeant Circuit* too is another fine portrait; and is interlarded with such knowledge of the technicals of the law, as make it, perhaps, the best stage burlesque on that profession. In the pleasantry of this piece, however, consists most of its merit: as the plot is too meagre; and the other characters, though lively and appropriate in the dialogue, bear no strong marks of originality.

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* As some apology for Foote's pursuing Garrick with such animosity, it should be stated, that he had some time before this (to meet the expences of his luxurious kind of living) asked the loan of five hundred pounds from Garrick; which the other readily lent him, but at the same time, it was said, made known the circumstance among their common friends. Foote resented this so indignantly, that he repaid the money and reserved him as a proper object of his ridicule on the first public occasion.

A transaction which happened at Bath in the ensuing year, again called out the muse of our author. The following are the leading circumstances of the event here alluded to :—

An old gentleman of good fortune in the neighborhood of that city, having made honorable professions of love to a young lady of great musical talents, every thing was soon arranged between the parties except the ceremony of the marriage. The sound of this awful word, however, made the gentleman recollect himself; and he wished to be considered no longer as a lover. The friends of the lady, very properly urging "that he should have thought of this before," demanded reparation: which he at first demurred to; but, to avoid the expenses of a law suit, as well as the censures of the world, it was said that he accommodated the matter for a sum of three thousand pounds.

With these materials our author has worked up a very diverting comedy, under the title of *The Maid of Bath;* directing his satire, where it should be placed on the character of the old gentleman, whom he describes under the name of *Flint*—and it would be difficult to point out one drawn with more precision and pleasantry. The parts of *Lady Catherine Coldstream*, *Sir Christopher Cripple*, and *Billy Button*, are also highly finished portraits; and render the piece, independent of its locality, one of the most pleasing in the extensive list of his dramatic productions.

Towards the conclusion of this season, having received a very encouraging invitation to winter in

Edinburgh, he prepared for a second trip to Scotland; of which he gives his friend Wilkinson notice in the following humorous letter:—

To Tate Wilkinson, Esq.

Dear Sir,

I AM much obliged to you for the offer of your assistance in the town of Newcastle, but the newspapers have laid out a plan for me that never occurred to myself.

I hope the nothern crown sits lightly on your brow; and that your immediate subjects are not only dutiful and observant, but that your whole wide-extended empire pay their taxes largely and cheerfully. I have this summer entertained the veteran Sheridan, who is dwindled into a mere Cock-and-Bottle Chelsea pensioner. He has enlisted some new recruits unfit for service, and such as might be expected to issue from his discipline.

I should be glad to chop in upon you, in my way to Edinburgh; for which place I shall set out about the middle of October. Ross is with me, ill and indolent; but however, thanks to my own industry, the campaign has been happy enough.

Believe me most sincerely yours,

Sam. Foote.

North-End, August 16.

About the end of October he set out for Scotland, and staid there till the beginning of the March following; but the novelty of his performances being now abated, he by no means succeeded so well as in his first trip. Travelling in winter through a country so mountainous and ill accommodated, did not at all suit a man of his habits of indolence and luxury: he therefore, on the whole, felt himself so mortified and disappointed, that from the following letter he seems to have decided upon making it his last trip northward:—

To Tate Wilkinson, Esq.

I THANK you, my dear Sir, for your congratulations on my arrival in Scotland; where, by-the-bye, I have encountered more perils than in a voyage to the Indies. Not to mention mountains, precipices, savage cataracts, and more savage men, I was locked up for near a week in a village, dirty, dismal and desolate, by a deluge of snow.

I think of quitting this town in three weeks; and shall certainly pay my homage to you in your kingdom of York, but not with the least design of becoming your subject; as my campaigns shall end with this place, and my future operations shall be confined to my own principality. I am glad to find that your theatre stands its ground, though you are so unfortunate as to hobble a little.

I shall let you know, by a line, on what day I shall be likely to see you. I beg my compliments to your amiable queen, and the whole royal brood.

Believe me sincerely yours, &c,

SAM. FOOTE.

Edinburgh, Feb. 16.

About this time, a general outcry had been raised against several members of the East India company, who, from small beginnings and obscure origins, had raised immense fortunes in a very short period. What made this more disgusting to the public, and particularly to the higher orders of the English, was, that these *new men*, from the extent of their purses, and the extravagance of their tempers, not only ousted many of the old families from their seats in parliament, but erected palaces about the country, and blazed forth in a style of magnificent living that eclipsed the steadier but less brilliant lights of the hereditary gentry.

On his return from Scotland Foote seized upon this popular subject, so congenial to his own vanity as well as to his talents; and in the summer of 1772 brought out a new comedy called *The Nabob*. In this piece, in the person of *Sir Matthew Mite*, the son of a cheesemonger, who is supposed to have made an immense fortune in the East Indies, he ridicules all the expensive vices and follies generally attached to such a character.

The public gave this portrait to a gentleman who had then lately returned from India, and who had been the son of a cheesemonger. Whether the author in fact particularly alluded to him, I do not exactly know: judging from all the circumstances, I should think not; as, except in the single point of his birth, there was nothing in the person, manners or address, that in the least resembled the supposed original. However, a party-resentment was roused; and two gentlemen who had been in high situations in the East Indies undertook personally to chastise the author for this insolence.

In pursuance of this design, they furnished themselves with oak cudgels, and sallied out for Suffolk-street, being resolved to make his own house the scene of his chastisement and disgrace. They arrived there about three o'clock; and on their sending up their names, Foote received them in his drawing-room, with that politeness and urbanity which no man knew better how to practise than himself. This had such an immediate effect upon them, that they thought proper to change their mode of attack, and begin with remonstrance.

On their first entering the room, he saw their purpose, and at the same instant saw the course proper for him to take. He therefore redoubled his politeness, and "hoped the gentlemen would take some coffee, which was ready in the next room, before they opened their business." This, however, was civilly refused: "the business must be first settled." They

then began to state "the insult which particular persons of character and fortune had sustained by the licentiousness of his pen; and for no other reason, than because Providence had favored their industry and adventuring spirit with a suitable remuneration."

They were proceeding in this manner, but rising into choler and irritability every moment, when Foote, gently interrupting them, requested "they would but hear him one word: which was, to beg they would only state their grievances with temper, till he made his justification; and then, if they were not fully satisfied, he was willing to meet every consequence of their resentment."

This being agreed to, the gentlemen continued the declaration of their grievances at full length. When they had finished, Foote began by assuring them in the most solemn and impressive manner, "that he had no particular person in view as the hero of his comedy: that he took up his story from popular report; and that as he was by trade a *wholesale popular-monger*, he thought he was perfectly secure from giving offence to individuals, particularly to the *honorable* part of the East India company's servants, by satirizing in a general way those who had acted *otherwise*."

He followed up this apology by taking the manuscript of the comedy out of a drawer near him, which he read to them; and by a happy display of ingenuity, so congenial to his character, he explained so fully to their satisfaction, that it was only *a general* satire on the *unworthy* part of the nabob gentry, that his vid-

tors called for coffee, and sat down to it in the most perfect good humor.

They continued chatting together till about four o'clock; when Foote begged the honor of their company to dinner, "having a small party (he said) to meet him, which he hoped would contribute to their entertainment." They were now too much attracted by the charms of his conversation, to refuse him a request of this nature: they staid to dinner therefore with the greatest pleasure; and felt their gratifications so much increased by the brilliancy of his wit, and the conviviality of his friends, that they did not leave the company till three o'clock in the morning.

The next day they talked of nothing but Foote: his wit, his humor, his politeness, and his hospitality; and how narrowly they had escaped from precipitating themselves into a quarrel, or a law-suit, with such an unoffending pleasant fellow. In short, his peace was not only fully established with the *East India corps*, but they attended his theatre every night, and supported his piece through the whole season.*

Having thus rode his *Nabob* over the course with success and credit, he next year brought out two new pieces: one called *Piety in Pattens*, in which he in-

* The above anecdote was supplied by a very near relation of one of the party, who added, that his friend afterwards had Foote often to dine with him at his house in town and in the country, and kept up a friendly intimacy with him to the close of our hero's life.

troduced what is called a primitive puppet-show; the other a comedy of three acts, entitled *The Bankrupt*. The first of these was intended to ridicule a species of writing known under the name of *sentimental comedy*, which was then very much gaining ground upon the stage. This was a sort of *moral essay* thrown into dialogue; which, as it demanded little or no knowledge of the human character in all the various and contrasted shapes of comic situation, was readily caught at by every smatterer in dramatic knowledge, who thus gained money and reputation without deserving either.

The mass of the public saw the innovation with a kind of indolent pleasure not entirely devoid of self-gratification. It was so much like the light fantastic kind of novel writing which their wives and daughters read in the parlour, that they were thus far critics when they came to the theatre. Having a previous knowledge how a modern love-match should be commenced, entangled, disentangled, and concluded, they became umpires of the drama, instead of mere spectators: and as those pieces were generally well sprinkled with common-place axioms of morality,—instead of waiting for the hand of criticism to lead them as heretofore, they would now decide at once for themselves; and in their newly acquired censorial character announced, "that the theatre was at *last* become what it ought to be, a public school of virtue and morality."

Dr. Goldsmith was the first to attack this illegitimate species of writing, by his successive productions of *The Good Natured Man*, and *She Stoops to Conquer*. Our hero followed, with his *Piety in Pattens*; in which he introduces, in the true ballad style, 'How a *maiden of low degree*, by the mere effects of morality and virtue, raised herself to riches and honors." These two being supported by other writers, soon laid the ghost of *sentimental comedy*; and John Bull was once more restored to his usual laugh and good humor.

But it sometimes unfortunately happens in mental, as well as in corporeal diseases, that in curing one species of complaint, unskilful physicians induce another equally dangerous. This was the case in the cure of sentimental comedy. Those writers who succeeded Goldsmith and Foote in their design, but who could not follow them in their talents, perceiving the success of the ridicule against gravity, thought that by making comedy *still more laughable*, it would accommodate more the taste of the public. They, therefore, to banish the style of *The Whole Duty of Man*, and *The Economy of Human Life*, took their model from Joe Miller; whence it resulted, that by a profusion of stale jests clumsily fitted to modern circumstances, and pantomimic tricks which were called *dramatic situations*, the stage, in general, is even at present so contaminated, that not only our best poets on the stock list are out of fashion, but many men of real dramatic knowledge feel the shame, as well as

the risk, of writing under such a degrading and discouraging patronage.

The comedy of *Piety in Pattens* was followed in the same season by *The Bankrupt;* which, as it was first written, was admirably calculated to do credit to the stage, by reprehending and exposing one of the greatest evils which can attach to a commercial country, that of fraudulent bankruptcies. But the well-known Mr. Fordyce happening to fail just before this period, which occasioned such a shock in the mercantile world as to render the year 1772 notoriously unfortunate, it was suggested to our author, that an application of some of the scenes might be made to this unhappy person; and as he really was a man of worth and high connexions, it would be extremely cruel to give room for malice to point him out as the subject of the comedy.

Though there was more of a mistaken good nature than of sound remonstrance in this application, Foote readily listened to it; and immediately altering the ground-work of his plot, rendered the piece what it now appears,—a tissue of detached scenes, without much fable, but blended with some strong delineations of character and temporary allusions, which, if they did not leave the comedy as *useful* as it originally stood, still afforded the public a pleasing dramatic entertainment.

With the success of these pieces, and at the pressing solicitation of Ryder the Irish manager, Foote set off for Ireland towards the end of October, to per-

form during the winter season, He arrived there in the November following, accompanied by Weston, Mrs. Jewel, and others; so that, being thus strengthened in the principal parts of his own comedies, he could insure the greater success. He opened with *The Maid of Bath*, which was followed by his last two pieces, and the usual course of his other characters; and was in all most favorably received.

His old patron, Lord Townsend, still continued Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and received him with his usual favor and hospitality. Hence he was a leading object of attraction not only at the theatre, but also at the Castle. The levee was uncommonly crowded when he was expected to attend: it was considered as a kind of comic rehearsal, where his wit and humor were exerted with universal applause; and his *bon-mots* were afterwards retailed throughout the town with equal satisfaction.

He felt and loved the natural disposition of the Irish, and always visited that country with peculiar gratification. In his journeys to Scotland and other places, his love of indolence often "threw a lion in the way;" but in his trips to Ireland he saw nothing but profit, pleasure, and reputation. In short, the temper of the people was so much in unison with his own, that he felt himself perfectly *at home* among them; and, on the other hand, they were so sensible of his attachment, that they hailed him as one of the patrons of their national character. In return, he was so gratefully sensible of this regard, that on taking leave,

of them this season (as if he had a *presentiment* of its being the last,) he complimented them in the following lines, which he spoke as a prologue to his comedy of the *Nabob:*

See! frugal Nature, with an equal hand,
Bestows peculiar gifts on every land.
To France she gave the rapid repartee,
Bows, and *bon-mots*, fibs, fashions, flattery,
Shrugs, grins, grimace, and sportive gaiety.
Arm'd with the whole artillery of love,
Latium's soft sons possess the power to move.
Humor, the foremost of the festive crew,
Source of the comic scene, she gave to *you:*
Humor, with arched brow, and leering eye,
Shrewd, solemn, sneering, subtle, slow, and sly,
Serious herself, yet laughter still provoking,
By teasing, tickling, jeering, gibing, joking.
Impartial gift! that owns nor rank nor birth;
'Tis theirs who rule the helm, or till the earth;
Theirs who in senate wage the wordy war,
And theirs whose humble lot conducts the car;
If ought deriv'd from her adorns my strain,
You gave—at least, discover'd first—the vein.*

* He used often to say, the difference between an Irishman and a Scotchman in relishing a joke was, that the former laughed too soon, and the other too late; as it is no uncommon thing for a Scotchman to be one hour in finding out the jest, and a second in raising up his faculties to enjoy it.

On his return to London, early in the spring of 1774, he brought with him a comedy, called *The Cozeners*, which he previously sent to Garrick for perusal. The latter was so flattered with this condescension, that, forgetting all the circumstances of the Jubilee, and other little matters of irritation, he wrote the following prologue for it, which was spoken by Foote himself on the first night of its representation.

"PROLOGUE TO THE COZENERS."

IN trifling works of fancy, wits agree
That nothing tickles like a simile;
So then by way of turning you to laughter
(With which, I hope, you'll tickle us hereafter,)
From our poetic store-house we produce
A couple spick and span, for present use.
Dramatic writers were, like watchmen meant
To knock down vice: few answer the intent.
Both should be quick to see and seize their game;
But both are sometimes blind, and sometimes lame.
Can those cry, "Stand!" while they themselves are reeling?
Can those "Stop thief!" while they themselves are stealing?
When wanted most, the watch a nap will take:—
Are all our comic authors quite awake?
Or, what is worse, (by which they still come near 'em,)
Are you not more than half asleep, who hear 'em;

I, your old watchman, here have fixed my stand,
On many a vice and folly laid my hand:
T was you cried "Watch!" I limp'd at your command.
Let me, like other watchmen, bless the times,
And take the privilege to nod betimes:
Nor let your frowns now force me, in a fright,
To cry "Past seven o'clock, and a CLOUDY night!"
But, with your patience not to be too free,
We'll change the subject and the simile.
To chase a smuggling crew, who law deride,
We launch a cutter of three guns this tide.
With your assistance we will make the foe
Sink, or submit to *Captain Timbertoe*.
Ye pirate critics, fall not foul of me;
If once I sink, I founder on the sea:
In this condition *(showing his artificial leg)* can I swim to shore?
I'm *cork*, 'tis true; but then I want an *oar*.
Besides, 'tis dangerous, I find, to steep
Myself and ship in brine twelve fathom deep;
My chin I'd rather above water keep.
You oft have sav'd my little bark from sinking:
I am no fish;—save me from *water drinking!*

This comedy met with considerable success: and it was generally thought that in the character of *Mr. Simony*, he alluded to the late Dr. Dodd; who had even then given some unhappy specimens of his

private character, by writing a letter to the Lord Chancellor, offering him a bribe for the presentation to a rich living, for which conduct he was very justly struck off the list of king's chaplains.

That our author pointed his satire with some propriety to this direction, afterwards more fully appeared in the fate of that divine; who, with all the advantages of a polite education, with a pleasing person and address, followed and beloved for his professional abilities, and under the immediate patronage of an eminent nobleman, yet fell a judicial victim to the syrens Fashion and Dissipation.

Before we relinquish this account of Dr. Dodd, it may perhaps be useful in other respects besides the mere purposes of biography, to relate the following anecdote, which has never yet been made public:—

The day after the Doctor was convicted at the Old Bailey of the crime for which he afterwards suffered (a crime which, he must have known, can never afford even a hope for the royal mercy in this commercial country,) he sent a note to the late Mr. William Woodfall, the original printer of the Morning Chronicle, requesting the favor of speaking to him on a very particular subject. This must have been a distressing summons to any one, but more particularly to a man of Woodfall's humanity: not to go, would be unkind: to go, would be incurring a scene of distress painful to his feelings. But Woodfall could never hesitate on a question of active and disinterested friend-

ship: and he hastened to Newgate on the very morning of receiving the invitation.

On entering the apartment where the Doctor sat, he found it impossible to avoid taking some notice of his unhappy situation; but as he was commiserating it in an embarrassed, sympathizing manner, the Doctor, with great apparent composure, interrupted him, by saying, "Oh! Mr. Woodfall, this is not the business I sent for you about. Sit down, and I will explain.—Though I have not the pleasure of personally knowing you, I am not unacquainted with the line of your professional business; which, I understand, engages you much in the habits of the theatres, the managers, and theatrical pursuits in general. I likewise have a particular respect for your judgment in those matters; and on this account, I think you can be of some service to me."—Here the other offering his civilities, the Doctor proceeded. "You must know, then, that being in my earlier days, like yourself, a lover of the drama, I sketched out a comedy, the hint of which I took from the story of Sir Roger de Coverley in the Spectator. This piece I have finished, *since my residence in Newgate;* and if you will be so good as to revise it, and give me your interest with the manager, I shall feel myself much obliged to you."

Mr. Woodfall, finding himself relieved by the conference taking so different and unexpected a turn, instantly acceded to his proposal, took the manuscript away with him, suggested some alterations, which

the Doctor readily complied with, and afterwards corresponded with him on this subject till the week before his execution.

Such is the anecdote which is here given on the authority of Woodfall himself; a man of unquestionble veracity.

We have now arrived to a period of our hero's life, when we are no longer permitted to range through the flowery walks of wit and pleasantry, but are constrained to shift the scene to the representation of more serious and gloomy incidents.

Ever on the wing for novelty in the line of his profession, he fastened on a certain lady of high rank,* at that time much talked of for her general eccentricities. Such a subject he thought fair game for his pencil, and he set himself to work in drawing her portrait about the latter end of the summer of 1775. The comedy in which she was to be introduced, was called *The Trip to Calais;* in which, under the character of *Lady Kitty Crocodile*, he had given such a picture of hypocrisy, intrigue, and oppression, as very rarely could be found to concentrate in one person.

This design (as was his usual careless habit) he mentioned to all his friends and acquaintances indiscriminately; and even introduced some parts of the principal character into conversation, to the no small amusement of himself and his companions. This, at

* The celebrated Duchess of Kingston.

length, reached the ears of the lady herself; who was so tremblingly alive to every thing which trenched on her fair fame and character, that she rallied her numerous friends on every side, to prevent the dreaded exposure on the stage. Their remonstrances at last prevailed with the Lord Chamberlain; which occasioned the following spirited lettter of remonstrance from our hero:

MY LORD,

I DID intend troubling your Lordship with an earlier address; but the day after I received your prohibitory mandate, I had the honor of a visit from Lord Mountstuart, to whose interposition I find I am indebted for your first commands, relative to *The Trip to Calais*, by Mr. Chetwynd; and your final rejection of it, by Colonel Keen.

Lord Mountstuart has, I presume, told your Lordship, that he read with me those scenes to which your Lordship objected; that he found them collected from general nature, and applicable to none but those who, through consciousness, were compelled to a self-application. To such minds, my Lord, *The Whole Duty of Man*, next to the sacred writings, is the severest satire that ever was written; and to the same mark if comedy directs not her aim, her arrows are shot in the air; for by what touches no man, no man will be amended.

Lord Mountstuart desired that I would suffer him to take the play with him, and let him leave it with the Duchess of Kingston. He had my consent, my Lord; and at the same time an assurance, that I was willing to make any alteration that her Grace would suggest. Her Grace saw the play; and, in consequence, I had an interview with her Grace. With the result of that interview I shall not at this time trouble your Lordship. It may, perhaps, be necessary to observe, that her Grace could not discern (which your Lordship, I dare say, will readily believe) a single trait in the character of *Lady Kitty Crocodile* that resembled herself.

After this representation, your Lordship will, I doubt not, permit me to enjoy the fruits of my labor, nor will you think it reasonable, that because a capricious individual has taken it into her head that I have pinned her ruffle awry, I should be punished by a poniard struck deep in my heart. Your Lordship has too much candor and justice to be the means of giving so violent and ill-directed a blow.

Your Lordship's determination is not only of the greatest importance to me now, but must inevitably decide my fate for the future; as, after this defeat, it will be impossible for me to muster up courage enough to face Folly again. Between the Muse and the Magistrate there is a natural confederacy: what the last cannot punish, the first often corrects: but when she not only finds herself deserted by her ancient ally, but

sees him armed in the defence of her foe, she has nothing left but a speedy retreat.

In that case, adieu, my Lord, to the stage! *Valeat res ludicra!*—to which I hope I may with justice add, *Plaudite!*—as, during my continuance in the service of the public, I never profited by flattering their passions, or falling in with their humors. Upon all occasions I have exerted my little powers (as indeed I thought it my duty) in exposing follies, how much soever the favorites of the day; and pernicious prejudices, however protected and popular. This, my Lord, has been done (if those may be believed who have the best right to know) sometimes with success. Let me add, too, that in doing this I never lost my credit with the public; because they knew I proceeded upon principle; that I disdained either being the echo, or the instrument of any man, however exalted his station; and that I never received reward, or protection from any other hands than their own.

I have the honor to be, &c.

SAM. FOOTE.

Receiving no satisfactory answer to this application, he soon after came to the resolution of suppressing the comedy; and wrote the following letter to her Grace, informing her of his decision:—

MADAM,

A MEMBER of the privy council, and a friend of your Grace's (he has begged me not to mention his

name, but I suppose your Grace will easily guess him,) has just left me. He has explained to me (what I did not conceive), that the publication of the scenes in *The Trip to Calais* at this juncture, with the dedication and preface, might be of infinite ill consequence to your affairs.

I really, Madam, wish you no ill, and should be sorry to do you an injury. I therefore give up that consideration, which neither *your Grace's offers*, nor the threats of your agents, could obtain. The scenes shall not be published; nor shall any thing appear at my theatre, or from me, that can hurt you,* PROVIDED the attacks made on me in the newspapers do not make it necessary for me to act in defence of myself. Your Grace will therefore see the necessity of giving proper directions.

I have the honor to be, &c.

SAM. FOOTE.

North-end.
Sunday, August 13, 1775.

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* Notwithstanding this declaration, with others still stronger, personally addressed to her Grace, and Foote's well-known contempt for money (particularly to be thus obtained,) it is but doing justice to all parties to record, that it was stated at that time, that the Rev. John Foster had made an affidavit before Sir John Fielding, importing that, after some conversation with Mr. Foote on the impropriety of publishing the piece in question, Mr. Foote said, that unless the Duchess of Kingston would give him *two thousand pounds*, he would publish *The Trip to Calais*, with a preface and dedication to her Grace.

To this letter a servant of her Grace's was directed to write the following *curious* answer:—

SIR,

I WAS at dinner when I received your ill-judged letter. As there is little consideration required, I shall sacrifice a few moments to answer it.

A member of *your* privy council can never hope to be of a Lady's cabinet.* I know too well what is due to my own dignity, to enter into a compromise with an extortionable assassin of private reputation. If I before abhorred you for your slander, I now despise you for your concessions. It is a proof of the illiberality of your satire, when you can publish, or suppress it as best suits the needy convenience of your purse. You first had the cowardly baseness to draw the sword; and if I sheathe it until I make you crouch like the subservient vassal as you are, then is there not spirit in an injured woman, nor meanness in a slanderous buffoon.

To a man, my sex alone would have screened me from attack; but I am writing to the descendant of a Merry Andrew, and prostitute the term of manhood by applying it to Mr. Foote.

Clothed in my innocence as in a coat of mail, I am proof against a host of foes; and, conscious of never

* This is an inuendo pointing to the circumstances of the prosecution against him, for an odious assault.

having intentionally offended a single individual, I doubt not that a brave and generous public will protect me from the malevolence of a theatrical assassin. You shall have cause to remember, that though I would have given liberally for the relief of your necessities, I scorn to be bullied into a purchase of your silence.

There is something however in your *pity* at which my nature revolts. To make an offer of pity, at once betrays your insolence and your vanity. I will keep the *pity* you send, until the morning before you are turned off: when I will return it by a Cupid, with a box of lip-salve; and a choir of choristers shall chant a stave to your *requiem*

E. KINGSTON.

Kingston House,
Sunday, 13th August.

To this letter Foote immediately replied in these terms:—

MADAM,

THOUGH I have neither time nor inclination to answer the illiberal attacks of your agents, yet a public correspondence with your Grace is too great an honor for me to decline.

I cannot help thinking that it would have been prudent in your Grace to have answered my letter *before dinner*, or at least postponed it to the cool hour of the morning: you would then have found that I had vo-

luntarily granted the request which you had endeavored by so many different ways to obtain.

Lord Mountstuart (for whose amiable qualities I have the highest respect, and whose name your agents very unnecessarily produced to the public) must recollect, that when I had the honor to meet him at Kingston-house by your Grace's appointment, instead of begging relief from your charity *I rejected your splendid offers* to suppress *The Trip to Calais*, with the contempt they deserved.* Indeed, Madam, the humanity of my royal and benevolent master, and the public protection, have placed me much above the reach of your bounty.

But why, Madam, put on your *coat of mail* against me? I have no hostile intentions. Folly, not vice, is the game I pursue. In those scenes which you so unaccountably apply to yourself, you must observe there is not the slightest hint at the little incidents of your life which have excited the *curiosity* of the grand inquest of the county of Middlesex. I am happy however, Madam, to hear that your robe of innocence is in such perfect repair: I was afraid that it might be a little the worse for wearing. May it hold out to keep your Grace warm the next winter.*

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* It is impossible to reconcile this statement (the truth of which he brings forward so respectable a nobleman as Lord Mountstuart to evidence,) with the Rev. Mr. Foster's affidavit, mentioned in the note to page 115; or, at this distance of time, to ascertain the real fact.

* Alluding to her Grace's trial for bigamy, before the House of Peers, which was then depending.

The progenitors your Grace has done me the honor to give me, are, I presume, merely metaphorical persons; and to be considered as the authors of my muse, and not of my manhood. A Merry Andrew and a prostitute are no bad poetical parents, especially for a writer of plays: the first, to give the humor and mirth; the last to furnish the graces and powers of attraction. Prostitutes, and players too, must live by pleasing the public; not but your Grace may have heard of ladies who by *private practice* have accumulated great fortunes.

If you mean that I really owe my birth to that pleasant connexion, your Grace is grossly deceived. My father, was in truth, a very useful magistrate, and respectable country gentleman, as the whole county of Cornwall will tell you: my mother, the daughter of Sir Edward Goodere, baronet, who represented the county of Hereford. Her fortune was large, and her morals irreproachable till your Grace condescended to stain them. She was upwards of fourscore years old when she died; and, what will surprise your Grace, *was never married but once* in her life.

I am obliged to your Grace for your intended present "on the day" (as you *politely* express it) "when I am to be turned off." But where will your Grace get the *Cupid* to bring me the lip-salve? That family, I am afraid, has long quitted *your* service.

Pray, Madam, is not J——n* the name of your

* A clergyman of the name of Jackson, better known by the assumed title of Doctor Jackson, who had for many years sup-

female confidential secretary? and is not *she* generally clothed in black petticoats made of your weeds?

"So mourn'd the dame of Ephesus her love!"

I fancy your Grace took the hint when you last resided at Rome. You heard then, I suppose, of a certain pope; and in humble imitation, have converted a *pious parson* into a *chamber-maid*. The scheme is new in this country; and has, doubtless, its particular pleasures. That you may *never want the benefit of the clergy* in every emergence, is the sincere wish of

Your Grace's most devoted,

Most obliged humble servant,

SAM. FOOTE.

Thus ended this singular epistolary correspondence: in which though our hero had evidently the advantage he was obliged to forego the representation of his comedy; which gave him no little mortification, as it af-

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ported himself partly as an editor of a newspaper in London, and always by a life of shift and expediency. He at this time mostly resided at Kingston-house, and was supposed to be one of her Grace's *cabinet council*. This man, after going through a variety of adventures incident to such characters, at last settled in Ireland: where his restless and intriguing spirit led him to join the rebellion in that kingdom in the year 1797, for which he was tried and found guilty; but saved himself the disgrace of a public execution, by taking poison the night before his receiving sentence of death.

fected both his profits and his resentments. He had at one time formed a scheme, that as he was prevented from exposing her on the stage, he would exhibit her to a much higher tribunal, the great body of the people, by having handbills publicly distributed between Hyde-park corner and Kingston-house, in the form of an execution narrative, as follows:

Setting forth the birth, parentage, education, and exaltation of *Lady Kitty Crocodile:* who, from a private station, first became an attendant upon a great lady at court, afterwards married an admiral in the British fleet, was a favorite sultana of several crowned heads abroad; and lastly, married a most noble and illustrious duke, by whom she became possessed of a large fortune, great rank, high connexions, &c. &c.

As we might suppose this wild plan to have been the sudden suggestion of resentment, he was easily prevailed upon by his friends to relinquish it. They represented to him that this would be a vulgar and injudicious common vehicle of abuse; as, whatever pain of mind it might give his antagonist, it must at the same time reflect an equal degree of disgrace upon his own character and understanding: that his satire would be directed to a much better purpose, to level it at her *adviser;** to whom, perhaps, the whole

* Jackson.

of her conduct in this affair may be attributed, and whom the public would readily acknowledge a proper subject of exposure and reprehension.

He was convinced by this reasoning; and accordingly expunged the objectionable scenes from *The Trip to Calais*, and brought it out early in the next summer, under the new title of *The Capuchin*. The plot and business of the original undoubtedly suffered from this alteration; yet, by transferring his satire from *Lady Kitty Crocodile* to *Doctor Viper* (alias *Jackson*), he has made ample amends. But that the reader may be enabled, in some respect, to judge for himself, the following scene between Doctor *Viper* and *O'Donnovan* is here transcribed; which for natural developement of character and pointed dialogue, it would be difficult to parallel.

Viper (aside). *The wind is veering; and when it comes fair, my old knight within will be for hieing homewards by the very first ship. Let me see: can I hit on no scheme to give him one little squeeze more? To be sure, what with tailors,* traiteurs, *toymen, the girl, and the gaming table, my trip to Paris has turned out pretty well. One smart parting blow I should be glad to*——

O'Donnovan. *Save you, good Sir!*

Viper. *D—n those barefooted beggars: a set of lazy, lubberly,—you may as well shift your ground, father, you'll get nothing from me.*

O'Donnovan. *Be it ever so little; we have nothing but the benevolence of good christian peo——Heyday! why, sure it cant't be! By my shoul but it is, sure enough. What! Doctor Viper! who expected to see you at Calais?*

Viper. *Pray, honest friend, when did our acquaintance commence?*

O'Donnovan. *It is not of a very long standing. Come, do shake your memory a little bit, Doctor, and you will soon recollect me.*

Viper. *It will be to no purpose.*

O'Donnovan. *I warrant. Surely, my dear honey, when you were the* doer *of the Scandalous Chronicle, was I not* death hunter *to the very same paper.*

Viper. *Hey! why you can't be Phelim O'Flam?*

O'Donnovan. *Not now; but I was about twelve months ago.*

Viper. *What could induce you to turn Capuchin?*

O'Donnovan. *A few murders only.*

Viper. *Murders!*

O'Donnovan. *Yes; in order to pay off my lodging, I killed a couple dozen of people that happened to be alive, and in good health, so the printer would employ me no longer.*

Viper. *Aye; I told you, O'Flam, what would happen: why, you became a perfect Drawcansir; and put more people to death than any three physicians in London.*

O'Donnovan. *And what then, Doctor Viper? Sure your poisonous pen did more mischief than me. My*

dead men walked about afterwards, and did their business, as if nothing at all had happened; while the stabs made on people's good name by your rancor and malice, will admit of no consolation.

Viper. *How is this?*

O'Donnovan. *In short, my dear Doctor, the only difference between us is this: my dead men are all alive, and your live men had much better be dead.*

Viper. *Do you know, sirrah, to whom you are speaking?*

O'Donnovan. *Oh! you may say that, my dear honey; from top to the bottom, every inch and cranny of you.*

Viper. *Pay the proper respect to my cloth.*

O'Donnovan. *What is it you mane? Is it a priest that you are?*

Viper. *Without doubt.*

O'Donnovan. *Then, upon my shoul, it must be of your own ordination, like Mr. Melchisedeck. A priest!—I'll wager you my frock against the price of a mass, that you can't tell how many the thirty-nine articles are.*

Viper. *An impudent, audacious——*

O'Donnovan. *What, because you was parish-clerk to the Moravian meeting-house in the Old Jewry, and used to snuffle out their indecent hymns to the tune of filthy ballads and jigs; and from thence you got expelled for robbing the poor-box.*

Viper. *What me?*

O'Donnovan. *Then you became advertisement-sticker to lottery-offices, auctioneers, stage coaches, mounte-*

bank doctors; but being detected in selling the bills for waste paper to grocers, you got your dismissal you know.

Viper. *Rascal! I know!*

O'Donnovan. *After that, you turned swindler; and got out of gaol by an act for the relief of insolvent debtors.*

Viper. *Many honest men have been in the same situation.*

O'Donnovan. *O yea! lave honesty out of the case, if you plase. Then you became* doer *of the Scandalous Chronicle, mowed down reputations like muck, pushed yourself into the pay of Lady Deborah Dripping, produced anonymous paragraphs against her of your own composition, and got paid by her for not putting them into your paper.*

Viper (aside). *Where the devil could the fellow collect all this story?*

O'Donnovan. *Now from here I suppose you will soon return home a fugitive, and pay your old debts by a new act of parliament.*

Viper. *Well, but Mr. O'Flam,——*

O'Donnovan. *O'Donnovan, if you plase. So you see Dr. Viper, you are pretty well known; and all your friends and acquaintance in this town shall soon know you as well as I.*

Viper. *The devil! Well, but my dear friend, what can be the meaning of this? why should we two quarrel?*

O'Donnovan. *Whose fault was it, Doctor, I pray?*

Viper. *Fault! Nobody's fault. I was a little forgetful, that's all. What! we have been connected before, and why should we not now? Ours is a natural alliance; we are poor dogs, and rich men are our game.*

O'Donnovan. *Nay, for the matter of that, I have no objection to hunt in couples.*

Viper. *That's right. Come: let's in, my friend, and drown all animosity in a bottle of Burgundy.*

[*Exeunt.*

Such a public exhibition must, to a man of Jackson's deep designs, be very mortifying. It, in some degree, would deprive him of his usual means of subsistence; for when the real character of an impostor is discovered and exposed, his art is at a stand, and all the mysteries of intrigue and duplicity vanish. Jackson felt this; but his sensations operated in a manner to such a heart, by driving him to meditate a species of revenge which nothing but the most diabolical malice could suggest.

From the first report of Foote's *Trip to Calais* being in contemplation, obscure hints and inuendoes appeared occasionally in the newspapers, relative to his private character; which, from various circumstances, as from their particularly appearing in the newspaper of which Jackson was the editor, the public unanimously attributed to this man. On the representation of *The Capuchin*, this plan of calumny began to assume a more settled form; and report was industri-

ously circulated about the town, that a charge would soon be brought forward in a judicial form against the manager of the Haymarket Theatre for an attempt to commit an odious assault.

How far any body was concerned with Jackson in this horrid scheme, cannot now be determined: the public opinion of that day strongly implicated his noble patroness; and what partly gave a sanction to this idea was, that Jackson had not the pecuniary means of carrying on such a prosecution himself, by defraying the mere necessary legal expenses, much less by giving to the business that importance which it evidently bore from the very commencement. The report, however, such as it was, spread from day to day; and as Foote had several enemies, occasioned by the lashes of his satirical pen, they formed a kind of coalition with the partizans of Jackson; and nothing was talked of but the utter downfal of the manager, the shutting up of his Theatre, &c.

Foote, as may well be imagined, felt much embarrassed under this load of obloquy, and for some time hesitated what to do. He took the advice of a select party of friends; who were unanimous for his opening the Theatre at the usual time, and throwing himself on the protection of the public.

Accordingly, on the 20th of May, 1776, the house was opened for that season, with the comedy of *The Bankrupt*; which was attended by a crowded audience, including most of the men of rank and letters in town. Many of the boxes too had been taken by la-

dies of the first distinction; but on their appearance the galleries made a dreadful noise, accompanied by some indecorous expressions, which obliged them immediately to retire—a conduct for which they were much applauded by the whole house.

When the curtain drew up, Foote came forward, and was received with prodigious shouts of applause, a few hisses from the corners of the galleries excepted: however, these being soon silenced, and order restored, he addressed the audience in the following manner:—

GENTLEMEN,

It was not my intention, after the charge that has been made against me, to appear before the public till I had an opportunity of proving my innocence; but as this charge was made at the critical point of time when I usually opened my Theatre, and having engaged as good a set of performers for your amusement as I could procure, it was the unanimous advice of my friends, that I should open my house, in confidence that the public were too noble, and too just, to discard an old servant for a mere accusation.

I am ready to answer every charge which can be brought against me; and have pursued such legal steps to clear my reputation from the virulent attacks of a public paper as will speedily bring the writer to an issue in the court of King's Bench, which has this day made the rule absolute against the publisher.

I beg leave to return my thanks for the marks you have now given me of your humanity and justice: permit me to promise you, that I will never disgrace your protection.

His situation called forth his sensibilities very powerfully; and a great majority of the audience honored him, both at that moment, and throughout the whole course of the comedy, with the most unbounded applause.

The plan, however, was too deeply laid to be abandoned for this temporary check: and it now began to develope itself in form and substance. Foote had, for some time previously to this period, turned off his coachman for repeated irregularities; and this discarded servant was now thought of by Jackson as a proper instrument for giving effect to his detestable scheme. The man had been a considerable time out of place without making any complaint whatever of his master; but suddenly he declared himself under the necessity of *doing justice to the public*, by bringing forward against him a charge of the most infamous kind; and whether founded or unfounded, must embitter the whole remainder of his life.

All the circumstances attending the execution of this design, were unremittingly noticed and commented upon in the paper which Jackson edited, till at last the affair assumed a legal form. On Monday the 8th of July, the coachman, accompanied by his reverend counsellor (Doctor Jackson), attended the grand jury at Hick's Hall, and there preferred a bill of indictment against Foote for a detestable misdemeanor.

As soon as the bill was found (which is a proceeding that depends solely upon the evidence *in support* of the charge,) Mr. Chetwood, as counsel for the

prosecution, contrary to the usual form and practice of the court, moved for a bench warrant to apprehend the defendant; which, as the chairman had no legal authority to refuse it, was granted, and an attorney and constable were instantly dispatched to put it in execution.

Fortunately for the defendant, having accidentally heard of this circumstance, he instantly went to Hick's Hall, accompanied by three respectable friends, and obtained a *supersedeas* to the warrant, his friends entering into separate recognizances of bail for his appearance. The prosecutors, ignorant of this proceeding, attempted to put the warrant in execution on the defendant's return to his own house; which evidently showed their design was to seize him unawares, and, by thus preventing his personal exertions in his profession, to do him the most essential injury.

Prompted by the same spirit of revenge, and by way of "making assurance double sure," the same parties attended at Hicks's Hall on the Thursday following, and there preferred another indictment (similar in charges, but only changing the *place*,) which was likewise found by the grand jury as a true bill, for the reason assigned above. The defendant's attorney on this, by a writ of *certiorari*, removed the whole cause into the Court of King's Bench, which consequently quashed the recognizances already entered into on this proceeding.

It was now under judicial consideration, whether a man high in the estimation of the public for splendid

talents and professional abilities, patronised by the great and learned, and in the direct road to fortune, should be dragged from this proud eminence, and consigned at once to contempt and infamy; or whether the whole charge would turn out a base fabrication, the offspring of malice and revenge. The pause was awful in the extreme to a man of the least sensibility; for, however conscious he might be of his innocence, the accusation was of that nature which, in the eye of the world, operates with peculiar severity against even the connexions of the person accused, and, by this means, too often leaves him unfriended and totally helpless.

But, to the honor of human nature, the very reverse was the case in the present instance. Our hero was so far from being abandoned, that his house, from the first moment of the charge being preferred against him, to the close of the trial, exhibited a continual assemblage of rank, learning, fashion, and friendship. Among the two former classes particularly, are to be numbered two royal Dukes, the late Duke of Roxburgh, the Marquis of Townshend, Mr. Dunning (afterwards Lord Ashburton), Mr. Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Fitzherbert, beside several foreign noblemen, and a group of other persons of the very first respectability.

They reasoned, with a dignity becoming their high characters, and with a feeling common to all "That if loose charges of this abominable nature were once permitted quietly to make footing in the practice of

the world, and to prevent friendship from supporting and rallying round the accused person, no man who kept male servants in his house would be safe from such calumny; as, from their habits of attending their masters at all hours, and in every situation, they would have opportunities to invent any story they might choose, on their being turned out of place, or meeting any other disappointment in their expectations, or demands. They might even, from their familiar situation, in time become mere instruments in the hands of others; who, seeing this easy road to vilify and ruin respectable characters, might suborn servants for the absolute purposes of carrying on their abominable schemes of interest, or revenge."

After an interval of a few months, the trial commenced, in the court of King's Bench, before Lord Mansfield and a special jury.

The principal and only evidence was the coachman; who, in particular, positively swore *to the point of time* which he chose to assign as the period of this assault.

On cross-examination, however, it appeared that the very day to which he swore was the 15th of May, which, he said, was the day of opening the theatre for the season; whereas it was proved on the oaths of several of the performers, that the Haymarket theatre did not open that season till the 22d of May. It likewise came out, that the prosecutor had been dismissed from the service of the defendant a considerable time before preferring the charge; and that

the money for carrying on the prosecution was supplied by the Rev. Dr. Jackson, who was not only his cashier on this occasion, but his principal adviser and director.

Mr. Dunning made a very able defence for the defendant: in which he pointed out, with his usual accuracy and eloquence, the grossness, the malice, and strong improbability of the charge; which he carried home to the prosecutors both avowed and concealed, with all the asperity of his wit and irony.—But there seemed to be very little necessity for this exertion of argument, except to expose the turpitude of the prosecution; and the latter, without even leaving the box, returned their verdict of *Not Guilty*.

Though Foote had many respectable persons much interested in his behalf, none seemed more anxious than his old friend, and fellow laborer in the dramatic vineyard, the late Mr. Murphy; who, as soon as the trial was over, took a coach, and drove to Foote's house in Suffolk-street, Charing-cross, to be the first messenger of the good tidings.

Foote had been looking out of the window, in anxious expectation of such a message. Murphy, as soon as he perceived him, waved his hat in token of victory; and jumping out of the coach, ran up stairs to pay his personal congratulations: but alas! instead of meeting his old friend in all the exultation of high spirits on the occasion, he saw him extended on the floor, in strong hysterics; in which state he con-

tinued near an hour before he could be recovered to any kind of recollection of himself, or the object of his friend's visit.

On the return of his senses, finding himself honorably acquitted, he received the congratulations of his friends and numerous acquaintances, and seemed to be relieved from those pangs of uncertainty and suspense which must have weighed down the firmest spirits on so trying an occasion. But the stigma of the charge still lingered in his mind; and one or two illiberal allusions to it, which were made by some unfeeling people, preyed deeply on his heart The man who for so many years had basked in the sunshine of public favor, who was to live in a round of wit and gaiety "or not to live at all," was ill calculated to be at the mercy of every coarse fool, or inhuman enemy.

He himself was the first to perceive this change in his constitution, and to provide for the consequences: he therefore determined to secure an annuity for his life, independent of professional labors; and for this purpose disposed of his patent in the Haymarket theatre to the late George Colman, Esq. on the 16th January, 1777. By the terms of this agreement, Mr. Colman obliged himself to pay to him a clear annuity of sixteen hundred pounds by quarterly payments, together with a specific sum for the right of acting all his unpublished pieces. Foote, on the other hand, agreed to put Colman in immediate possession of his premises; engaging at the same time, not only to give him the refusal of all such dramatic writings as

he might himself produce, but also to perform on no other stage in London than that of the Haymarket.

According to this arrangement, the theatre opened in the May following, under the sole management of Mr. Colman; and in a few nights afterwards Foote made his first appearance as a performer only, in his comedy of *The Devil upon Two Sticks*. But "what a falling off was there!" The mental anxieties which he had suffered during the course of the last year, had evidently preyed upon every part of him: his cheeks were lank and withered, his eyes had lost all their wonted intelligence, and his whole person appeared sunk and emaciated.

His friends and the impartial part of the audience, cheered him with their unbounded applause; while a few of another description, who still pursued him, interspersed their hisses. He rallied, however, a little in the course of the play; but the public seemed to accept his services rather in remembrance of what he had been, than for what he then was. He afterwards, at intervals during that season, appeared in three or four of his other characters with the same kind of success; when, being seized with a paralytic stroke while performing his favorite part in *The Devil upon Two Sticks*, he was under the necessity of relinquishing his engagements at the Haymarket, and spent the remainder of the summer at Brighthelmstone.

Having in some degree recovered his health and spirits at this place, he was advised by his physicians to try the south of France during the winter; and,

with this intent, reached Dover on the 20th of October 1777, in his way to Calais. The wind proving unfavorable on that day, and his spirits recovering a little of their usual tone, he played off a number of whimsical sallies of humor, of which the following may serve as an instance :—

On his going into the kitchen of the Inn, to order a particular dish for dinner, the cook, understanding that he was about to embark for France, (and perhaps willing to have a satirical stroke at French travellers,) was bragging that for her part she was never out of her own country. Foote, who had humor of every kind ready on all occasions, instantly replied, " Why cookey, that's very extraordinary ; as they tell me above stairs that you have been several times *all over grease*." (Greece).—" They may say what they please above stairs or below stairs," replied the cook, " but I was never ten miles from Dover in all my life." " Nay, now, that must be a fib," said Foote, " for I have myself seen you at *spit-head*." The servants by this time caught the joke, and a roar of laughter ran round the kitchen; in which he joined as hearty as the best of them, and which ended in his giving them a crown to drink his health, and a good voyage.

Providence however had determined otherwise.— This flash of merriment was but the last blaze in the socket; as he was seized on the very next morning with a shivering fit while at breakfast, which further increasing, he was put to bed. Another fit soon succeeded this, which lasted three hours. He then

seemed composed, and inclined to sleep; but soon began to breathe low, which continuing for some little time, he at length with a deep sigh, expired on the 21st of October 1777, in the fifty-seventh year of his age.

The body was removed to his house in Suffolk-street, Charing-cross, where it lay for some days, and the funeral was announced for the Monday following; but on that day many of the friends who hailed him at the Theatre, and partook of the flashes of his merriment as well as the hospitalities of his table, forgot to pay their farewel duties. They all had their frivolous excuses. His laugh and hospitalities were now gone; and, finding themselves free from the reach of his remark, they readily acquitted themselves of owing any thing to his memory. Such are, and such ever will be, the result of these indiscriminate friendships; mere confederacies of pleasure or convenience, taken up without any virtuous principle of attachment, and often dismissed without even the appearance of regret.

Three coaches however, full of *real* friends, and *amateurs* of the drama, (the one consisting of his domestics, the other two of those who respected his talents more than they partook of his hospitalities,) followed his hearse on Monday night to Westminster Abbey, where he was buried by torch-light. It was an awful and reverential ceremony, never to be effa-

ced from the memory of the Editor of these Volumes; exhibiting the most impressive lecture on the vanity of human talents, and the fleeting condition of all those, who, for a while draw on them the gaze of the world.

REMARKS ON HIS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CHARACTER.

FOOTE was in his person about the middle size, rather clumsily made; with a broad fleshy face, that would be reckoned vulgar and unmeaning, but for a certain archness in his eye, which at once overcame all other appearances, and instantly proclaimed him the genuine humorist. There are several prints of him both in his dramatic and private character, none of which are unlike; but the most perfect is the French print published immediately after one of his trips from Paris, and which is prefixed to these Memoirs.

He married early in life, but had no children by this union. His wife was a gentlewoman of Worcestershire, the choice of whom met with the approbation of his family. But a man of his volatile disposition was ill calculated for the sober pleasures of matrimony: she died, however, in good time for both parties; before age came on to incite a further distaste in her husband; and before (as might perhaps have been the case) he had disgraced himself by adding ill-treatment to neglect*.

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* The following curious circumstance took place soon after this marriage. He and his wife were invited by his father to spend a month with him in Cornwall; when, very much to their

Like many other managers of a theatre, he had his amours; and by a connexion of this sort he had two sons. One died before the father; the other, though left without any fortune, was taken under the protection of a friend (I believe, Mr. Jewel, the present treasurer of the Haymarket theatre), who humanely continued that protection to the death of his young ward.

Foote's mother, who brought a large fortune to her husband as heiress to the Goodere estates, was latterly, by a carelessness and dissipation so peculiar to this family, in a great measure dependant on her son's bounty; as was also his brother, who was brought up

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surprise, on the first night, as they were going to bed, they were entertained with a concert of music, seemingly under their window, executed in a capital style. This lasted about twenty minutes. On relating the circumstance next morning to the father, and complimenting him upon his gallantry, he absolutely denied any knowledge of the affair, and doubted the possibility of its occurring. The young couple, however, were positive as to what they had heard; and our hero was so impressed by it, that he made a memorandum of the time, which afterwards turned out to be the very night of his uncle, Sir John Dinley Goodere, being murdered by his unnatural brother.

Foote always asserted the fact of this occurrence with a most striking gravity of belief, though he could by no means account for it. One day, being asked whether he ought not attribute it to a supernatural cause? He replied, "No; I never could bring my mind to that: but this I can tell you; it has made such an impression upon me, that if I once thought so, I would not be out of a convent a single day longer.

to the church. To the latter he allowed sixty pounds a year, besides the freedom of his table and theatre; to the former a pension of one hundred pounds till her death, which happened some years before that of her son*.

In respect to his public conduct, his well-known character as a satirist, and a man of free discourse, subjected him to much misrepresentation. Judging of him by the supposed malice of dragging an individual before the tribunal of an audience, or by the exact propriety of a *bon-mot*, the world attached no small share of ill nature and profligacy to his character: though he undoubtedly may have thought that in the one respect he was benefiting society, in somewhat the same manner as a surgeon who dissects a diseased

* Under one of her temporary embarrassments, she wrote the following laconic epistle to our hero; which, with his answer, exhibit no bad specimen of the thoughtless dispositions of the two characters.

"DEAR SAM,
"I AM in prison for debt; come and assist your loving mother.
"E. FOOTE."

"DEAR MOTHER,
"SO am I; which prevents his duty being paid to his loving mother by her affectionate son,
SAM. FOOTE."

"P. S. I have sent my attorney to assist you; in the mean time, let us hope for better days.

subject for the purpose of promoting the general health of mankind; and that in the other, it was at least excusable to employ his wit and humor, merely to create an innocent laugh. The fact is, that although Foote was certainly far from holding out an example for unreserved imitation, either in the correctness of his morals, or the regularity of his habits, he was yet equally far from being systematically bad. The conscious superiority of great parts made him careless about the inferior decencies of life; and "the renown of being smart" induced him to say many things not at all prompted by his feelings. But his expressions were set against him, and his enemies made the most of them.

He left the University with a good share of classical knowledge, which he never lost sight of in the midst of his greatest dissipations; snatching occasional hours for not only reviewing his school reading, but also for perusing some of the best authors in French and English. This he continued to do through life; judging very properly, that the fame of mere conviviality goes no further than the temporary attachment of bottle companions, and is as easily lost as acquired; while a superior knowledge gains respect and inward satisfaction. This was his pleasure and his pride; here he cultivated his taste, and enlarged the views of his comprehensive mind.

In the early part of his life he was what the world then called a fine gentleman: and in his morning rambles through the parks, at the Bedford, &c. he

exhibited a full dress suit, bag wig and *solitaire*, sword, muff, rings, &c. so that he was often taken for a foreigner. He was occasionally fond of dress to the last; but his taste in this was not so correct as in other matters: he was seldom wholly uniform; and took snuff in such quantities, as often rendered him a very slovenly *beau*. He lived much in taverns, and at public places, in the early part of his life; but when he became settled as manager of the Haymarket theatre, and his revenue assumed a more enlarged and permanent form, he resided regularly, when he wintered in London, in Suffolk-street; and in the summer almost constantly at North-end; where he kept up the pleasures of the table with great splendor and hospitality. His company generally consisted of men of rank and fashion, some literary characters, and a selection from the stage.

In *this* scene he always acted to great advantage. Though he did not, like Lorenzo de Medici, arrange his guests at table according to the punctuality of their arrival, he placed them so as to shew no marked distinction or superiority. Every body was talked to, and attended, in turn; every body was drawn into his best subject of conversation; and often the man of modesty, or of weaker powers, was supported by the well-timed and polite interference of the host. In short, he set every one at ease with himself, the better to enable him to please and be pleased.

In these exercises of hospitality, he knew his own station perfectly well, and supported it with great pro-

priety. He carved well, and expeditiously; and his table was covered, on such occasions, with every thing suitable to a man of taste and fashion:—two or three courses, a handsome desert, French wines, &c. He added to these his best treat, his own conversation: not only in the brilliancy of his wit, but also on the more solid topics of taste and literature. It was often astonishing to those who did not know the whole range of his mind, and who had only given him credit for mere humor, to see with what versatility he could turn from the broadest mirth to subjects of history, politics, and general learning. Even the subject of religion (the last which, from his giddy heedless conduct, he was suspected of understanding) he discussed with becoming gravity and knowledge; evincing a strong sense of the practical duties of moral life, as well as an intimate acquaintance even with the writings of the fathers, and the several branches of ecclesiastical history.

His more familiar days were passed with a few friends, and one or two needy actors or authors, who constantly hung upon him, and to whom he was kind in his purse, his table, and advice. Yet as "no man is a hero to his *valet-de-chambre*," so these intimates were witnesses to great occasional dejection of spirits. He would suddenly fall from the height of mirth to the lowest note of "moping, musing melancholy;" then burst into a flood of tears, exclaiming, that "his follies had made him many enemies, and his extravagance would bring him to a workhouse!" But these

seemed to be mere momentary fits of despondence, occasioned by a previous waste of animal spirits: as the first object of ridicule which presented itself, he instantly seized; and with a spring of fancy, that seemed to rebound in proportion as it had been compressed, he again blazed out in all his meridian brightness.

In his benevolence and charities, he was liberal; and had always several poor pensioners on his list, besides his purse being open to occasional donations. He was likewise a very indulgent master to his servants. In his theatre, he preserved the same kindness, not only in his general treatment of the performers, but in retaining those who lived long with him, merely from friendship, often when he had very little occasion for their services. Poor old Usher was one instance of this, among many others. This man could latterly do little in the line of his profession, but that little he did decently; and Foote often said, "he kept him on purpose to show *the superior gentlemanly manners of the old school.*" Usher played with him till Foote relinquished the theatre; he then descended to the elder Colman as an *heir loom*, and from him to the present manager, in whose service he closed the last act of a long and irreproachable life.

In thus detailing the private life of Foote, we are almost naturally led to a comparison of him with Garrick. They were the two theatrical meteors of their day: both men of wit and education; both authors, managers, and actors; both objects that attracted the ad-

miration of the public; and by this collision of characters, they may perhaps better elucidate each other, than by an individual description.

Foote was by far the better scholar of the two; and to this superiority, he added also a good taste, a warm imagination, a strong turn for mimicry, and a constant fresh supply of extensive occasional reading from the best authors of all descriptions. He could likewise apply all these advantages with great readiness; so that either with his pen, or in conversation, he was never at a loss.

Garrick was no *Grecian*. Davies says of him, in his Memoirs, that "he had *once* made himself master of all the Greek words;" but admitting that he had retained them, what sort of a Greek scholar would *this* knowledge have made him? In respect to the Latin he might, perhaps, have acquired some proficiency when he was under the care of Dr. Johnson at Litchfield; but Johnson afterwards said of him, "David has not Latin enough; he finds out the Latin by the meaning, rather than the meaning by the Latin." He was, however, tolerably conversant in the classics; a good Frenchman; and read and conversed occasionally in the Italian.—He also possessed a good taste, with a pleasing lively manner of delivery. The fact was, that Garrick's literary pursuits were in a great degree checked by the sudden influx of his fame and fortune; for when he became a manager, it happened of course that, from the care of a great theatre, from his own performances, and the attention which he paid to pe-

cuniary concerns, he had no time for the high and regular improvement of his mind: he saw a mass of wealth presenting itself before him, and he "*clutched*" it with a much more certain grasp than the air-drawn dagger of Macbeth; leaving at his death more than one hundred thousand pounds, with this *most affectionate* compliment to his relations, "that he knew of no friend out of their circle."

Though Foote was not deficient in paying his respects to men of rank and fashion, he never sought them with any kind of unbecoming eagerness, or made the least distinction at his table between them and the obscurest guest. When that table too was all in a roar, as it usually was, he never stopped the career of his *bon-mot* out of respect to persons; it as readily struck a noble duke as a poor player. His visitors knew the terms on which they met: some approved of them from the general love of wit and good humor, while others endured them in order the better to keep within his favor and friendship.

Garrick, on the contrary, was all submission in the presence of either a peer or a poet; equally loath to offend the dignity of the one, or provoke the irritability of the other: hence he was, at times, too methodical in his conversation to admit of his mixing in "the feast of reason and the flow of soul." To his dependants and inferior players, however, he was indeed *king* DAVID, except when he had a mind to mortify them by means of one another. On such occasions, he generally took up some of the lowest among them;

whom he not only cast in the same scenes with himself, but frequently walked arm in arm with in the Green-room, and sometimes in his morning rambles about the streets.

In his domestic arrangements, Garrick was uniform and respectable; a handsome house in town and country, carriages, servants, &c. and when he gave grand entertainments, he saw some of the first company, for rank and abilities, in the kingdom. But in such meetings, conversation generally partook more of a high-bred style, than the easy familiarity of a social party; except when Foote, Chase Price, Rigby, Fitzherbert, and others of this class were present. *Then* indeed the pale of high breeding was instantly broken down; and wit, fun, and good humor, became the order of the day.

But fairly to taste the respective powers of these two distinguished characters, was to see them *pitted* together at the table of a third person, in the range of general and free conversation: a scene in which they often appeared, and where they both displayed powers which placed them so deservedly high on the scale of public importance.

The mind of Garrick,—strong in natural force, which was further aided by great professional knowledge, talents for mimicry, a wide range of good company, and much acuteness of observation,—afforded him innumerable topics of conversation, which he dilated upon in a very pleasing and agreeable manner: but this was in all cases regulated by, and made su-

bordinate to, his deference for superiors in rank or station, and his great respect for the decorums of life. He dared not let his shaft fly with the freedom of Foote's, for fear of giving offence; and from this cause has probably often repressed those coruscations of fancy, which would otherwise have shone with greater lustre. In fact, Garrick's chief excellence did not lie in the *reciprocity* of conversation; but in the narration of lively and agreeable anecdotes, humorous stories, &c. drawing his knowledge, as it were, rather from an intellectual *reservoir* than a *spring*. Yet in these respects he was often so pleasing, so fanciful, and so characteristic, that it would be difficult to find a man who could make and leave a more favorable impression on his company.

Foote's conversation was of such a description, that "nought but itself could be its parallel." Teeming with fancy and various knowledge, fearless of consequences, and privileged in the character of a wit, he took his stand with confidence, and threw his shafts around him with the dexterity of a master, the first and the last of his own school. He was rapid, lucid, and exuberant; and his images of ridicule, and portraits of characters, were so strong, novel, and whimsical, that he carried the imagination of his hearers insensibly along with him. In short, Garrick's conversation was like a gentle heat, that cheered and warmed; Foote's, a meteor that delighted by the splendor of its blaze.

Being (as is above remarked) a better scholar too than Garrick, he had a greater command of topics. He could turn "from gay to grave, from lively to severe," with facility, and discuss whatever subject occurred with much precision and classical authority, while upon all such matters Garrick seemed to argue rather cautiously, and took care never to go beyond his depth; sometimes contenting himself with the character of an humble listener, and at other times playing an under-part to Foote. But these condescensions did not always conciliate the esteem of our hero; who, perhaps envying the great fortune, and still greater professional abilities of his rival, availed himself of the only superiority which he retained, and seldom failed to exercise this with an unsparing keenness, whenever an opportunity offered.

Upon the whole, it would be difficult to pair two such masters of conversation; and they were always considered in the circles of those who ennobled rank and adorned literature. For though Foote had evidently the advantage in the bright and luminous parts, and raised the admiration of a louder laugh; Garrick gained a steadier approbation, and always excited a pleasing degree of mirth and inoffensive cheerfulness.

AS AN ACTOR,

Foote has been so much and so long praised, that it would be incurring some risk to differ in any degree

from this general opinion. There are, however, some persons now living, who were reckoned good judges when the art of criticism stood upon much higher ground than at present, whose decision "overweighs a whole theatre of others;" and to such I appeal in not thinking him entitled to this general applause.

His first appearance upon any stage was, as has been before observed, in the character of *Othello*; perhaps the part, in the whole range of the drama, (if he properly estimated his own powers) for which he was the least qualified. But, as was likewise remarked, that the inclination of a young man strongly attached to pleasure, and educated in habits of gaiety, should wish to make his *debut* as a lover or a hero, was very natural, and that this wish should make him mistake or overlook the real turn of his own character, was equally so. On the other hand, it is but doing him justice to say, that he was one of the first to see and correct his own error. The decided failure of his *Othello*, and one or two other parts in a similar line, soon shewed him that "imperial Tragedy" must sit upon her throne alone; and that if she sometimes condescends to divide her power with Wit and Humor, it is by the *singular* bounty of nature, and should form no precedent for general expectation.

Having thus become conscious of his proper *forte*, he exerted it in those parts which he thought most suited to his genius. The principal of these were as follow: *Fondlewife*, in *The Old Bachelor*; *Sir Paul*

Pliant, in *the Double Dealer*; *Ben*, in *Love for Love*; *Shylock*, in *The Merchant of Venice*; and *Bayes*, in *The Rehearsal*; besides the several principal characters which he afterwards performed in his own pieces.

In the first of these he had fortunately remembered that great master of the old comic school, Colley Cibber; and from this source he availed himself of all those little touches and graces with which *he* embellished it. Hence he gained, and merited, much applause from the critics of that day. He sometimes, it is true, would diverge from his great exemplar; and though he often gained additional credit from taking the bye-road, yet in proportion as he was less *Cibberian*, he was thought, by the best judges, to be less natural.

He seemed to have no model for *Sir Paul Pliant* but himself. He was indeed sufficient in respect to the study and knowledge of it; but chastity of character was ever one of the most difficult points for him to hit, or at least to settle on. Other performers, whose judgment were not broken in upon by the exuberance of fancy, or the propelling influence of imagination, had only to copy the original, and as far as they could do that, they were satisfied: but Foote, being under no restraints of this kind, was so much of an original himself, that he was impatient of the fatigue of a copyist; and when he once got the outline, he filled up the canvas himself,—not altogether with the appropriate costume of the character; but

what availed him more (not only in pleasing the greatest part of the audience, but often in seducing the best judges), his own irresistible humor and "precious foolery."

In tracing great objects to their original source, we not unfrequently find them to arise from trivial and incidental circumstances; and on this principle it is curious to observe, that it was partly his predilection for this part of *Sir Paul Pliant*, that first led him to discover the seeds of original genius in a very young actress, who afterwards became one of the greatest ornaments of the comic theatre.

The lady we allude to, is the present Mrs. Abington. She was then just introduced on the stage; and had been, for her first summer excursion, acting at the Richmond Theatre. At that place Foote saw her in *Lady Pliant*; and was so unexpectedly charmed with her taste, humor, and fine conception of the part, that, after paying the highest compliments to her talents behind the scenes, he immediately introduced her to Mr. Lacy, who engaged her for the next winter at Drury-lane.

When she made her first appearance here, she equally surprised Garrick; who, after a few trials, told her it would be her own fault if she did not stand at the head of her profession." Her research, her taste, her assiduities, joined to her fine talents, verified this great master's prediction: for after her trip to Ireland (where the high patronage which she experienced there for several years called forth and fostered

her talents), she returned to her old situation at Drury-lane Theatre, a finished actress; and continued there, and at Covent-garden, till she retired from the stage, equally the great object of comic attraction, and the arbitress of taste and of fashion*.

To pursue the progress of our hero's characters.—His *Ben* in *Love for Love*, though much followed for a time, was, perhaps, the worst of all his performances, except his *Othello*. It had none of the genuine *naïveté* and simple sprightliness of the sailor; and, as if afraid of doing too much (his general failing), here he did too little. A cotemporary writer, (who, if unbiassed, was a competent judge of theatri-

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* On the retirement of Garrick from the stage, it was currently reported for some time, that Mrs. Abington would retire likewise; which occasioned the following lines, supposed to be written by a very eminent lawyer of that day.

Scarce had our tears forgot to flow,
By Garrick's loss inspir'd,
When Fame, to second such a blow,
Said "Abington's retir'd."
Gloom'd with the thought, Thalia mourn'd;
The Graces join'd her train;
And nought but sighs for sighs return'd
Were heard round Drury-lane.
But see! 'tis false; in Nature's style
She comes, by Fancy grac'd;
Again gives Comedy her smile,
And Fashion all her taste.

cal merit) * says, "it was as lifeless a lump of insipidity as I ever saw; he had not even his usual confidence in the part, but shrunk from it, as under a timid impression of not doing it proper justice." Yet such is the caprice of public taste, that his *Ben* was the great object of attraction for many nights in one season, and crowded boxes of beauty and elegance gave another proof how little fashionable criticism is to be relied on.

Before Macklin revived the part of *Shylock*, which was not many years antecedent to this period, it was generally played by a *comic* performer, who, doubtless, "gave it a spice of his quality." Whether Foote wished to revive the old practice, or thought he could do full justice to it in its present state of representation, is uncertain; he, however, in undertaking it, made little less than a total failure. The plodding Jew merchant, the specious friend, and inflexible creditor, were scarcely once discernible in his features, or in his acting: he now and then, it is true, attempted to follow the poet, but in vain; and finding he could not succeed in the serious, he turned to the favourite pursuit of his soul, the ludicrous:—here his triumph was infallible in his own opinion, and often in the opinion of his audience;

"While Common-sense stood trembling at the door."

* Davis.

The late Mrs. Clive had so poor an opinion of him in this part, that on being suddenly called to rehearsal for *Portia*, she asked, in her own coarse way, "Who is to play *Shylock ?*—"Mr. Foote, Madam," said Garrick (presenting him at the same time).—"What, *you !*" looking contemptuously on him: "*you* play *Shylock* to my *Portia !* Oh ! then I'm off;" and she was as good as her word; for she instantly quitted the theatre, and the play was obliged to be changed. Foote was so much abashed at this rebuff, that I believe he never afterwards performed this character before a London audience.

Thus far he has not appeared as the possessor of any valid claims to the unqualified praise which general report has transmitted to the present time; but he rises in our estimation when we are led to contemplate him in the part of *Fayes*, as well as in the various characters of his own pieces. In these last, particularly, the spirit of the author being transfused into the actor, it was necessary to be expected that the representation should be more correct and animated.

The original design of *The Rehearsal* was to expose the very absurd taste of the dramatic writers of those times, by alluding to various passages in their plays, and holding them out to the contempt and ridicule which they deserved. Those authors seemed to have no other view than that of contributing to the pleasures of the day that was passing over them; and in order to effect this, they nourished the vicious taste of a debauched court, by rendering the stage (which

ought to be a school of morality and *instructive* gaiety) a mere receptacle of profligacy, bombast, and novelty.

It is with some degree of pain that we are obliged to number in this list our great Dryden; or, as Pope affectionately calls him upon the occasion, "unhappy Dryden!" who was so far from being exempted from this disgrace, that he, in a great degree, contributed to it in most of his dramatic pieces, more particularly in his two parts of *The Conquest of Granada*. A better account of these pieces cannot be given than in the following very judicious and spirited criticism of Dr. Johnson.

"These two plays are written with a seeming determination to glut the public with dramatic wonders; to exhibit in its highest elevation a theatrical meteor of incredible love and impossible valor, and to leave no room for a wilder flight to the extravagance of posterity. All the rays of romantic heat, whether amorous or warlike, glow in *Almanzor*, by a kind of concentration. He is above all law, exempted from all restraints: he ranges the world at will, and governs wherever he appears: he fights without inquiring the cause, and loves in spite of the obligations of justice, of rejection by his mistress, and of prohibition from the dead.

"Yet the scenes are, for the most part delightful. They exhibit a kind of illustrious depravity, and majestic madness; such as, if it is sometimes despised,

is often reverenced, and in which the ridiculous is mingled with the astonishing."

The hero of *The Rehearsal* was originally intended for Sir Robert Howard (a celebrated dramatic writer, and the brother-in-law of Dryden,) under the name of *Bilboa;* in which part, his writings, as well as those of Sir William D'Avenant and others, are exposed in the most poignant satire. In the original, the character of *Bilboa* was partly personal, perhaps alternately alluding to Howard and to D'Avenant; but when Dryden became poet-laureat, the author hitched him into the place of D'Avenant under the title of *Bayes*, in which many of the little peculiarites of his dress and manners are said to be recorded.

On the death of Dryden, *Bayes* seems to have lost his *personality;* and to be only considered as an affected poet, enamored of his own writings. The very dress of the character became no longer prescribed, and every actor was at liberty to represent him as he and the manager could agree.

The original actor of *Bayes* was John Lacy, whom old Downs, the prompter, calls "a man of infinite comic humor;" but how he dressed in that part, is now uncertain. Yet, as Dryden, when full dressed, generally appeared in black velvet, he probably imitated the original in this respect. The immediate successor of Lacy is unknown. The next was the celebrated Joe Haines; but his mode of dressing the character is likewise unrecorded. Dick Estcourt, the celebrated mimic, appeared in *Bayes* as *the smart*

genteel coxcomb of the day; in which he was followed by Cibber, and at first by Garrick, who soon however altered it to a dress which he thought more suitable to the pedantic conceit and solemnity of the dramatic coxcomb: he wore a shabby old black coat, a small hat, a long flowing brown wig, high topped shoes with red heels, a mourning sword, scarlet rolled-up stockings, and cut-fingered gloves.

These particulars are here mentioned partly to satisfy theatrical curiosity in matters that are sometimes thought too unimportant to be recorded, and to show that Foote, neither in the *personal* character, nor in the *dress* of *Bayes*, was bound to any individual imitation; though his own good sense led him to copy Garrick in the latter, as seemingly more corresponded with the original design of the character. With this single adopted restriction in point of dress, he had the authority of his predecessors for adding what new superstructure he pleased to the original building; and in this respect his strong sense, and the rapidity of his imagination, gave him great advantages. The public transactions—the flying follies of the day—the debates in parliament—the absurdities of play writers, politicians and players—all came under the lash of his wit and humor: he seized on every thing and every body, that could furnish merriment for the evening; and all seemed pleased and delighted with the agreeable *melange*. Garrick's *Bayes*, humorous and mellow, excited the smile of admiration; Foote's, the irresistible laugh which carried all before it.

As an actor on his own ground (that is, in the performance of his own dramatic writings) his merit still rises higher; for here at least he must be acknowledged to have understood his author thoroughly, which is no trifling assistance towards an appropriate representation. It is therefore but justice to say, that I believe there was no actor of his time who could support the characters which he assigned himself with such general pleasantry and richness of coloring. At the same time, I must protest against one species of his theatrical fame, even in these parts; as I never thought him that correct and chaste mimic of the individual, which the generality of the world allowed him, and on which so much of his stage reputation was founded.

If we understand by *mimicry* a close imitation of the person, voice, manners, &c. of the particular person to be represented, Foote most certainly could not strictly be held (if we except the single character of *Aprice*) a chaste mimic. His person, from its original clumsiness, and the natural broad unmeaning stare in his face, even with all the advantages of his eye, could scarcely be brought to assimilate exactly to any one character. His tones too were nasal and sharp, so that he had no compass in his voice to admit of much variety; while his address, which was never pliable or disengaged, and was rendered much worse by the loss of his leg, was another drawback upon his talents, and completed his impossibility of rendering a very close imitation.

Estcourt, one of his predecessors in the part of *Bayes*, was what may be called a real mimic; uniting all the powers of his art so exactly, as almost to identify the character which he intended to represent. Sir Richard Steele, who knew and loved this performer, tells the following anecdote of him; which at once shows the extent of his powers, and an example of the never-failing irritation which similar powers create in the breast of the person who is thus rendered the object of their ridicule:

"Secretary Craggs, when a young man, in company with some others, introduced his friend Dick Estcourt to Sir Godfrey Kneller, as a person who could give such a representation of many of his friends as would surprise him. Estcourt, on this, immediately began; and mimicked Lords Somers, Halifax, Godolphin, and others of his acquaintance, so very exactly, that the knight (though otherwise a grave character) was in convulsions of laughter.—While all this was at other people's expense, it was very entertaining; but when Craggs gave him the wink, and he began upon Sir Godfrey himself, he instantly sprung from his chair in the greatest passion imaginable, exclaiming, 'Nay, nay; there you are out, young man! that's not me—that's not me!"

The best and most impartial critics of Foote's time have warranted my opinion of him on this subject; such as Messrs. Murphy, Chase Price, Fitzherbert, Drs. Goldsmith and Johnson, &c. The

last of these particularly (who, though he did not like the man, yet respected his own judgment too highly to yield to prejudice) has said of him, "that although he had wit, fertility, and a great variety of humor to bear upon the parts he had to perform, yet he was not a chaste mimic."

How then are we to account for that high reputation which he attained and supported in this line of performance, through life? The answer is easy: by one of those deceptions which are not unfrequently practised with success on those whose education and researches preclude them from discriminating the genuine from the counterfeit. Foote had a quick discerning eye towards the follies and vices of mankind; and with one view caught the leading feature of the character he wanted to expose, with some remarkable incident of *his* life. The union of these formed his basis, and his own powers of humor did all the rest. The audience were, at the same time, in the secret against themselves: for the name of the person intended to be mimicked, and the plot, being previously insinuated into the boxes, they were prepared for the likeness; and finding a strong *caricature* suddenly thrust upon them, tricked out with all the glare of coloring, they were either too much prepossessed, or had too little judgment, to examine the particular features. Hence all was approbation and applause; and hence even the better judges were sometimes momentarily deceived by the commanding impression of such rich humor and buffoonery.

AS AN AUTHOR,

The first effort of Foote's pen seemed to mark the future eccentricities of his character. This was a narrative of the murder of his uncle, Sir John Dineley Goodere, (as related in the beginning of these memoirs ;) in which he undertook the defence of his other uncle, Captain Samuel Goodhere, who was executed for this crime on the fullest and clearest evidence. Why he should have singled out this subject, so disgraceful to himself and family, for his maiden effort may at first view appear so profligate and absurd, as to be a subject of perpetual charge against him: but though I by no means intend to defend the decency or morality of this action, some extenuations may be made for so whimsical a genius.

When he was induced to write this pamphlet, he was a very young man, immersed in all the expensive follies of the times, and had just outrun his first fortune. In these distressed circumstances, without trade or profession, and when perhaps borrowing could go no further, he was solicited by a bookseller in the Old Bailey, with the powerful inducement of ten pounds in hand, and ten more on the sale reaching a stipulated extent, to write upon this subject, which was the popular story of the day, and of which he was supposed to be more intimately informed than any other person, from his near connexion with the parties. The event was likewise no secret to the world; it was already in every body's mouth: and the

pamphlet was published without his name, which saved him the open disgrace which would attach to him from the circumstance of his being known as author.

It may be supposed too, that in attempting to defend the character of his uncle Samuel from the charge of his brother's murder, he might imagine himself employed in wiping away a stain from his family: for though the evidence against this unhappy man was strong, and at the time incontrovertible, there might be a *possibility* of his innocence; which whether the writer believed or not, he might hope that his ingenuity could so manage it, as partly to withdraw the public odium from his memory.

All these circumstances, together with the imperious necessity of *eating*, were strong temptations to a mind not overcharged with the impressions of religious, or moral duties; and which, at that time, could probably see no other possible means of procuring a subsistence.

But it may be said, that he should have endured the severest strokes of fortune, rather than submit to such a case; while others may carry their rigor still further, and exclaim, "that he should have died rather than eat the bread of such dishonor!" The first may readily be granted: but the second is so much a question of *nerve*, that few men perhaps could answer for themselves till the moment of trial; and Foote, in his firmest and most philosophic hour, was no *Roman*.

The following little anecdote seems so naturally to belong to the character of the man who could write the narrative just alluded to, that it would be injuring the portrait to omit the recital of it.

On the morning of his carrying home the copy of this pamphlet to his bookseller, he was iu such necessitous circumstances, that he was actually obliged to wear his boots without stockings; and on his receiving his ten pounds, he stopped at a hosier's in Fleet-street to repair this defect. He had scarcely issued from the shop, when he was met by two or three of his old college chums; who had just arrived in London on a frolic, and now challenged him to make one of their party to dinner at the Bedford. He at once lost all reflection, and accepted the proposal: he used indeed at all times to say, "that a careful rigid economy was the most mortifying thing, next to absolute want;" and perhaps on this occasion he had no other thought than that of losing the remembrance of his late sad hours of meditation in the conviviali-ties of early friendship.

While the glass and good humor circulated round the table after dinner, one of his companions, *smok-ing* his boots, cried out, "Why, hey, Foote, how is all this? you seem to have no stockings on?"—"No," said the other, instantly recollecting himself; "I never wear any at this time of the year, till I am going to dress for the evening; and you see I am always provided with a pair for the occasion." On his here pulling a pair of white silk stockings out of his pocket

it silenced the laugh and suspicion of his friends; and it passed off as the singular frolic of a very singular character.

The next literary work which he produced (independent of his dramatic pieces), was *A Treatise on the Passions*, written about the year 1747: in which he brings to the bar of the public, the several merits and defects of Garrick, Quin, Barry, and other principal actors; and though he pays some compliment to Garrick's *Lear*, yet at the same time indulges himself in noticing what he calls "the blemishes of that character."

This pamphlet evidently bears the impression of talents, and shows the graver powers of Foote as a critic and a man of reading in a very forcible point of view; but from his very outset in life, every thing which sounded the praise of Garrick was wormwood to his soul. He always spoke contemptuously of him as a writer, and in many particulars strove to depreciate his merits as an actor; but in vain! Garrick's theatrical abilites were of that splendid and genuine stamp, which could not only stand the test of ridicule, but attach ignorance or malice to all who could not admire them.

Beside these, he wrote two other pamphlets; the one upon comedy, the other on tragedy: which were reckoned very elegant and judicious performances. But the degree of literary merit by which he will be long remembered, is that of being a *dramatic* writer of a new cast, who drew the *veluti in speculum*,

closer to the eyes of an audience, than any author before his time, by bringing forward particular and recent characters to elucidate the views of general nature.

When Foote produced his first piece at the Haymarket Theatre, he may be said to have exhibited a species of dramatic writing (if we except the single instance of the Duke of Buckingham's *Rehearsal*) unknown since the *middle comedy* of the Grecian stage. *This* was so called, as being an improvement on the *old* comedy; which, succeeding the *cart* of Thespis, partook in a great degree of the loose jokes, personal abuse, and irregularities, of that wild state of the drama. No rank or condition was spared in the old comedy; not even the chief magistrates, nor the very judges by whose voice they were permitted to perform: their insolence at last reached to open impiety, and their ridicule was levelled equally at gods and men.

This licentiousness was at length restrained, by a law which gave birth to what is called the *middle* comedy, and which provided that no man's name should be mentioned on the stage, under severe penalties; and public censors were appointed to make reports of all who should offend in this particular.

But it unfortunately happens, that when abuses are found profitable, or gratifying to human malignity, art and chicanery are exerted to cover them, notwithstanding any law which can be made to the contrary. Thus the poets of those times were not long in find-

ing out the secret of defeating this regulation, by attaching fictitious names to well-known and real characters: so that now they had the superior advantage of giving a more exquisite gratification to their own vanity, and the malice of their spectators: by affording to the former the pleasure of imposing upon the latter the task of discovering the real individuals pourtrayed by the different personages which passed in review before them.

When pictures so much resemble their originals that the names are unnecessary, nobody inscribes them. The consequence of this law, therefore, was merely to cause that to be done with some delicacy, which before was done more grossly; and the art which it was intended to confine within the limits of propriety, was still transgressed, but with more ingenuity.

Before our entering into the merits of Foote as a dramatic writer, it will be necessary to discuss how far he was justifiable in adopting this particular species of the drama, and whether the practice is reconcileable to the rules of justice and the genuine laws of comedy.

The advocates for this personal satire (and in this number must be included almost all those who have touched upon the life and character of Foote) urge, "that when hypocrisy and dissimulation would insidiously contaminate the principles of mankind, it is but doing justice to the world to withdraw the mask, and expose to public view the natural features in all their distortions and deformities: or when affectation and

singularity overcloud the more valuable parts of characters, which, divested of these foibles, might claim additional value and respect in society, it is themselves alone who act the ridiculous part; and it should be deemed rather an act of kindness both to them and their friends, to set up such a mirror before them, as would give them the hint and opportunity of correction. "In a word," say they, "if a *Sir Penurious Trifle*, a *Peter Paragraph*, and a *Cadwallader*, have ever had their prototypes in real life, let them keep their own secret, and reform their respective follies: nor can we help being of opinion, that an author of this kind is, in some respects, more useful to the age in which he lives, than he who only ranges abroad in the various scenes of life for general character.

On the other hand, and with much more reason, many who readily agree as to the necessity and uses of reforming the vices and follies of mankind, yet totally differ about the means. In every well regulated government, men give up a certain part of their rights in order to form that subordination and discipline by which the society is held together, and without which all would be lawless confusion. Now if every man who thinks he has abilities and candor for the office of a reformer, undertakes to correct his neighbor's vices and follies, he assumes an actual part in the government of the country with which he is not entrusted; and being in this under the sanction

or direction of no specific law as to the execution of such an office, he finds himself at liberty to act according to the arbitrary dictates of his own malice, his interest, or his mistaken good intentions.

To this it is no answer to say, that "as the law takes no particular cognizance of these subjects, individuals *may*, in so doing, produce benefit to society:" most certainly they *may not:* for though the law, for wise and salutary purposes, is silent in attaching punishment to some things not strictly moral, or suppressing others that may be merely ridiculous; yet it will punish men who merely by their own authority usurp this office; whenever the parties attacked can prove their injuries in point of fortune, character, peace of mind, or any other respect.

But to come more immediately to the case in point before us,—how, in reality, did our author, with all his wit, judgment, and knowledge of the world, either benefit the age he lived in, or reform the individual, by the few instances which he has left us of his strong personal satire? Why, in one example, by ridiculing a very virtuous man, because he had the misfortune of losing a leg? In another, by trampling on the laws of friendship and hospitality, in order to expose a respectable individual, merely because he labored under some personal defects, or might have a little too much family pride? And in a third, by attacking a woman already under a criminal prosecution, and opening a side-battery of ridicule upon her private follies and vices?

If the advocates for this kind of satire are not satisfied with modern instances, let us trace it back to its fountain-head, and there we shall see it in its very source as foul as its remotest currents. History informs us, that its original introduction, far from mending the morals of the Athenians, operated quite the reverse; for the poets, finding themselves sheltered under the perversions of the law, broke out into a wide and ungovernable range of personality and partial invective, which soon rendered Comedy, as it has been forcibly remarked, "rather a Fury armed with torches and firebrands, than a pleasing and instructing preceptor of human life."

Who, that reflects but for a moment on such a man as Socrates falling a victim to this kind of buffoonery, will not revolt from it with horror and detestation? Contemplate this man, who is truly recorded as "the divine philosopher," dragged forth every night on a public stage, to make sport for unfeeling folly and vulgar malice: and, what must still heighten the profligacy of the spectacle, himself sitting among the audience, with the greatest philosophical forbearance; thus affording to licentiousness its widest latitude, by setting in comparison the great original with the baseness and besotted ingratitude of his fellow-citizens.

The lessons of *such* a school of morality quickly produced suitable results. The public exposure of this exalted man, prepared the way for the designs of more serious enemies; who, availing themselves of

the already corrupted state of the public mind, brought charges against him which ultimately and successfully affected his invaluable life; casting a scandal on the city of Athens, which neither its subsequent repentance and tears, nor the lapse of successive ages, have ever been able to eradicate.

It now only remains to apply to the advocates for personal satire the *argumentum ad hominem*, by asking them the simple question, How would they like to be thus exposed themselves? And with what degree of philosophic temper could they sit in a crowded theatre, surrounded by the winkers, laughers, and sneerers,

A fixed figure for the hand of Scorn
To point his slow unmoving finger at?

The patient endurance of such a scene, is almost above the feeling of humanity: as has been already proved in a variety of instances; particularly Dryden, Sir Godfrey Kneller, Garrick, the elder Sheridan, and even Foote himself; who, though all hearty laughers at the foibles of others, felt with various degrees of resentment the reprehension of their own. In short, the liberty of the stage is like the liberty of the press; we call it a blessing when we are inclined to write against others, but a grievous calamity when we find it turned in a similar manner against ourselves.

Away then with this species of stage reformation! equally derogatory to morality and to genuine

comedy: which latter does not seek to make its satire personal, but to correct the manners by the representation of public vices and public follies; which gives the individual the lesson of advice, without exposing his want of it; which does not keep a show glass to exhibit private scandal and defamation, but

"Holds the mirror up to nature:
To show Virtue her own feature, Scorn her own image;
And the very age and body of the time
Its form and pressure."

In reprehending this dramatic vice (which has been done with some detail, in the hope of setting the question at rest), it must however be observed, that the writings of Foote cannot be charged universally with it; for except in three or four instances (in which the persons are almost described by name), he has perhaps not much departed from the line of general satire. It is true, as he was an author that hunted the fleeting follies of the day more than any of his contemporaries, every thing that was most conspicuous fell under his observation, and of course was subjected by him to particular applications. But this does not attach to him in the way of censure; since he does not personify the parties, or dramatize the incidents precisely as they happened. He only acts the part of a skilful physician; who investigates the *endemial*

complaint, and applies that remedy which he thinks most likely to cure it.

Leaving him therefore to his fate when he is guilty, he is entitled to our justice equally in those pieces which are independent of personal satire: these form the far greater part of his works, and may be ranked among the favorite *petites pieces* of the drama.

That he never attempted the more enlarged and perfect species of comedy, was probably by no means owing to a deficiency of abilities, but to the nature of the original plan which he prescribed to himself; being principally that of exhibiting *one* strong portrait, with all the other characters subordinate to it, without the assistance of much intricacy of plot, or episode: and in considering the happy selection which he has made from the great means of temporary vices and follies, and the manner in which he has arranged that selection, who can deny him the praise of judgment and exuberant fancy?

His comedies, therefore, may be considered as *sketches*, rather than as finished pieces: where we are to look for the *genius* and *taste* of the artist, without the labored *detail* of his pencil. From the effect of what we see, we are at once satisfied; and do not wish to have our curiosity obstructed, or the broad laugh suspended, by the interference of inferior personages, who often seem to be retained in the service of the Muses for no other purpose than to assist in the *denouement* of the piece.

Besides the strength of his characters, his dialogue shows a solid and extensive *knowledge of mankind* in their various customs and manners; now exhibiting the keenest strokes of temporary satire, and now a flow of humor which nothing but the closest judgment, and the most penetrating discernment of human nature, could suggest.

In the quality of WIT he is equally exuberant: with a store equal to that of Congreve in his proudest day of dramatic reputation, he never scatters it indifferently. Foote's *wits* are real wits; "his *fools* are fools indeed."—His HUMOR is in the same degree of *keeping:* all are distributed with great dramatic justice; and from the natural *minutia* of expression on which the basis of character is founded, and which render it the truest *conversation copy* of the times in which he wrote.

On the whole, Foote must be considered as a great and fertile genius, possessed of a comic vein, superior in many respects to that of any writer of the age he lived in. Happy for the range of his talent, that it was totally *unfettered by the cares of life!* Fortune, under her lowest declensions, could not control his spirits; he saw the follies and vices of mankind with a quick, discerning, yet *undisturbed* eye. Hence his constant accuracy of discrimination of character; and hence his humor, ridicule, satire, and wit, all ranged at will, free and unchecked in the course of their respective excursions.

It has been often asked, rich and humorous as his dramatic writings are admitted to be, will they outlive the present age? Some, no doubt, from the individuality of their character, and the raciness of the incidents, will lose much of the charms which they originally afforded: but posterity will discover that these were once the reigning vices and follies, and will perceive that they have been exposed by a writer fully competent to the subject; while many of his pieces, which carry a broader mark of satire, (such as *The Minor*, *The Devil upon Two Sticks*, *the Liar*, *The Patron*, *the Mayor of Garrat*, *Taste*, *the Commissary*, and others), will always more or less apply to existing characters.

In delivering this opinion, however, let it be remembered, that as Foote himself and Weston filled most of the principal characters, great care must be taken to provide for them as able substitutes as possible. Without such workmen, therefore, the dramatic materials of Foote must lie on the shelf, till others may be found who can exhibit them to equal advantage. The *mere walking gentlemen* of the present stage will not do: they have been unhappily trained in a kind of dialogue so very different from his, that it scarcely partakes of the same idiom; and if suddenly thrust into characters speaking a *new language*, they must appear as awkward as *Tom Errand* in *Beau Clincher's* clothes.

I have now closed the account of the life of a man who, in many instances, may be considered as a very

rare original, which Nature, in her gayest moments, seems to have cast in a mould expressly made for the purpose. Such a character deserves a conspicuous niche in the temple of private history. In his talents, let us admire the singularity of his genius, the sprightliness of his wit, the exuberance of his fancy, and the frequent utility of his satire. Even from his follies, let us be warned of similar errors, when we find that neither the most brilliant natural qualities, nor the favors of fortune, can secure happiness and respect, unless founded on the basis of virtue and prudence.

The following is a correct list of our Author's dramatic works, with the several dates of their performance and publication.

		Performed.	Printed.
1	Diversions of the Morning *(not printed)*	1747	
2	Auction of Pictures *(not printed)*	1748	
3	The Knights, a Comedy	1748	1754
4	Taste, a Comedy	1752	
5	The Englishman in Paris, a Comedy	1755	
6	The Englishman returned from Paris, a Farce	1756	
7	The Author, a Comedy	1757	
8	The Diversions of the Morning, altered, a Farce *(not printed)*	1758	

		Performed.	Printed.
9	The Minor, a Comedy	1760	
10	The Liar, a Comedy	1761	1764
11	The Orators, a Comedy	1762	
12	The Mayor of Garrat, a Comedy	1763	
13	The Patron, a Comedy	1764	
14	The Commissary, Com.	1765	
15	Prelude on opening the Hay-market Theatre	1767	
16	The Devil upon Two Sticks, a Comedy	1768	1778
17	The Lame Lover, Com.	1770	
18	The Maid of Bath, Com.	1771	1778
19	The Nabob, a Comedy	1772	1778
20	Piety in Pattens, a Farce *(not printed)*	1773	
21	The Bankrupt, a Comedy	1773	
22	The Cozeners, a Comedy	1774	1778
23	The Capuchin, a Comedy	1776	1778
24	A Trip to Calais, Com. *(never performed)*		1778

Besides these pieces, he suffered his name to be put to a work, entitled, *The Comic Theatre*, in 5 volumes, 12mo. being a translation of a number of French comedies, of which the following is a correct list. I am informed, however, on good authority, that *only the first of these* (named the Young Hypocrite) can, with any certainty) be ascribed to him.

THREE DRAMATIC PIECES

OF

SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq.

Not published in his Works.

THE SECOND ACT* OF

THE DIVERSIONS OF THE MORNING.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL DRURY LANE, 1758-9.

Dramatis Personæ.

Puzzle, ...	MR. WILKINSON.
Freelove, ...	MR. HOLLAND.
Manly, ...	MR. BURTON.
Prompter, ...	MR. CROSS.
Crambo, ...	MR. BLAKES.

Players—by several of the Company.

Bounce was at first omitted; but when Mr. Foote acted *Puzzle*, *Bounce* was performed by Mr. Wilkinson.

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* *Lady Pentweazle*, from the comedy of *Taste*, was altered for the first act, and performed in the above year at Drury-lane Theatre; but is here omitted, as it is printed in Mr. Foote's works.

SCENE—the Playhouse.

Enter, PUZZLE, *followed by the Prompter*.

PUZZLE.

A TRUCE to your impertinence! I tell you I'm above law!

Prompt. Why, Sir, 'twas but last night I heard a goodish-looking well-dressed man, that sat in the next box at the porter-house, affirm, that to his knowledge, if you proceed to exhibit, you and your pupils would be all sent to Bridewell.

Puz. So much the better—the ministry will then interpose; they who are now pursuing in every point the public good, can't refuse to patronize my plan. But this is all stuff, the idle rumor of the day—is there any body without?

Prompt. All the pupils, Sir, and Mr. Crambo the poet.

Puz. 'Tis strange that the man won't take an answer—I'll dispatch him first—show him in—

Prompt. Mr. Crambo.

Enter CRAMBO.

Puz. Why I told you, Mr. What d'ye-call'em, that I exhibit no pieces but my own—why will you—

Cram. It is very hard—I'm sure I write to the present taste.

Puz. Then it is not worth twopence—the present taste is abominably corrupt—To correct that is part of my plan. Are you answered?

Cram. Then all my hopes are vanished—here have I been a scene dangler for these thirty years, and my writings constantly refused by every manager of every theatre.

Puz. Hah! there's something in that—have you shown e'em this?

Cram. All, Sir.

Puz. And what's their judgment?

Cram. Plump against me.

Puz. I don't dislike that—Is it a tragedy or a comedy?

Cram. A deep tragedy, Sir.

Puz. What's your title?

Cram. Bungy.

Puz. There's novelty in that—there's salt in Bungy.—What's your subject?

Cram. I'll read the argument.

Puz. No—give it me—very few authors can read their own works—*(reads)* "Marc Anthony—Julius Cæsar—Pompey the Great—and—Peter Reynolds." Peter Reynolds!

Cram. That's my English character. I have mixed him with the Romans, to show the superiority of the ancients compared with moderns.

Puz. That's well conceived—but to proceed: "and Peter Reynolds, are all inflamed with the love of the Princess Maudlin—she burns with an equal ardor for

them; for being bred up in a state of innocence, she thinks she may, without offending the rules of modesty, love the whole four, which she does accordingly with a becoming warmth of passion."

Cram. There rises my distress.

Puz. Eminently mournful, and highly natural, upon my honor, Mr. Crambo!

Cram. But what I chiefly pique myself upon is, the propriety and unity of my character; for while my heroes are ransacking all nature for lofty similies for the Princess, see how natural and characteristic is Mr. Reynolds's comparison.

Puz. (reads.)

" Oh! what a Lord Mayor's feast of joy art thou!
" Thy face is venison, and thy neck white veal,
" And all thy other parts are beef and pudding."

Cram. You see, Sir, I make him compare his mistress to the things he loves best.

Puz. True; beef and pudding! a happy conceit. I am infinitely pleased with the subject and characters, and make no doubt but I shall be equally charmed with your conduct. I am sorry we can't give it a reading at present—In the evening you may command me—In the interim, take this as my firm opinion—my cool deliberate judgment—that your piece has more of the true veritable pathos, than any tragedy I have seen these ten years.

Cram. You comfort me—and you'll bring it out?

Puz. It is my interest.

Cram. Your obliged and most devoted—will you have a letter wrote to you on your new project? or a copy of commendatory verses in one of the journals?

Puz. Bye-and-bye— it may'nt be amiss—In the mean time, the run of my kitchen, and a sop in the pan, when I roast, you may command.

Cram. It shan't cost you a farthing—Sir your most obedient humble servant.—*(Exit Crambo.)*

Puz. That's a genius! call in the players.

Prompt. Walk in, gentlemen.

Enter Players.

Puz. So, gentlemen—I hope you have all taken pains to excel in your several parts—But there are some new candidates—What are you, sock or buskin?—

Play. Shoes and boots, Sir.

Puz. What?

Prompt. He is the shoe-maker from Cranburn-alley, Sir.

Puz. Oh! I beg your pardon—honest Master Upperleather.

Upp. At your service, Sir.

Puz. And what—you are ambitious—nothing but a trunchcon! tragedy, I suppose.

Upp. Yes! I likes that best.

Puz. Can you read?

Upp. I could, when came from the charity school, near as well as my master—but I believe I have almost forgot.

Puz. Try—*(holds a book often to him.)*

Upp. "Now are our bones broke with victories."

Puz. Often very true in fact—but not exact to the letter; however, I like your ignorance—you'll have the less to unlearn.—Come, gentlemen, now range yourselves to the right and left—

Enter MANLY *and* FREELOVE.

Ha! Mr. Freelove, I am your devoted servant—you find me in the hurry of business—in the midst of my nursery.

Freelove. May your plants prosper! I have brought this gentleman, no slender critic I assure you Mr. Puzzle, to wonder at your art.

Puz. He does me honor—hum!—in its infancy—its riper days may perhaps claim attention.

Manly. I am no stranger to your talents.

Puz. I think it will do—and should we fail her, I intend to write a treatise on elocution and read lectures to both universities.*—But to our business—range yourselves to the right and left—be silent and attentive.—I first lay down some general rules for the proper expression of the passions—you will afterwards discern their particular applications—take care—erect your heads and project your chests.—Very well! Now for the deportment of the hands—you can't but

* Mr. Sheridan was at this time giving Lectures on Elocution.

have observed how often they embarrass the actor, gentlemen,—sometimes here, sometimes there;—in short, eternally in the way *(here the players exercise and move altogether, as directed)*.—First invocation—*tendens ad sidera palmas*—Distinction—the pointed finger—the clenched fist for rage—total relaxation, dilapidation, &c. for sorrow.—Very well. Now for a general disposition.

Erect your heads—clench your fists, throw your heads upon your left shoulders—start, and to the left about—exceedingly well!—a fine expression of anger! Now your grief—drop your heads—strike your breasts—dilate your jaws, and to the right about—very well!—drop your jaw a little lower *(here one of the players extends his mouth very wide)* —zounds! I must raise that man's salary to stop his mouth! Now for an application of those rules to a particular part:—Advance Bounce—take a turn or two—there's a well form'd figure for you, full of shoulders, fine features!—he shall treat you with a rant in *Othello**—you will then judge of his powers:—begin at "Othello's occupation's gone."—Now catch at me, as you would tear the very strings and all—keep your voice low—loudness is no mark of passion—mind your attitude.

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* The scene between *Puzzle* and *Bounce* was meant for mimicking Macklin teaching Barry *Othello*.

Bounce. "Villain!"

Puz. Very well!

Bounce. "Be sure you prove my love a whore."

Puz. Admirable!

Bounce. "Be sure on't!"

Puz. Bravo!

Bounce. "Give me the ocular proof."

Puz. Lay your emphasis a little stronger upon oc—oc—oc—

Bounce. "Oc—oc—ocular proof."

Puz. That's right.

Bounce. "Or, by the worth of my eternal soul, thou had'st better been born a dog."

Puz. Grind *dog* a little more—"d-o-o-g, Iago."

Bounce. "A d-o-og, Iago, than answer my wak'd wrath."

Puz. Charming! now quick *(speaking all the time).*

Bounce. "Make me to see it, or at least so prove it, that the probation bears no hinge or loop to hang a doubt on—or—woe."

Puz. A little more terror upon *woe*—wo—o—e, like a mastiff in a tanner's yard—wo—o—oe (*they answer each other*—wo—o—o—oe, &c.)

Bounce. "Upon thy life! if thou dost slander her, and *torture me.*"

Puz. (pushing him away.) Oh! go about your business,—'twont do,—go—go—go—am sorry I have given you this trouble.

Bounce. Why, Sir, I—

Freelove. Oh! Mr Puzzle, let me intercede for him.

Puz. (imitating Macklin). Sir, do you consider the mode of the mind—that a man's soul is tost, and lost, and crost, and his entrails broiling on a gridiron—bring it from the bottom of your stomach, Sir,—with a grind as "TO—R—R—R—"

Bounce. "Tor—r—torture me!"

Puz. That's my meaning.

Bounce. "Never pray more—abandon all remorse."

Puz. Now—out with your arm and show your chest—there's a figure!

Bounce. "On horror's head—"

Puz. Now out with your voice.

Bounce. "Horrors accumulate."

Puz. Now tender.

Bounce. "Do deeds to make Heaven weep."

Puz. Now terror.

Bounce. "All earth amazed! for nothing canst thou to damna—"

Puz. Grind "na—na—na—nation."

Bounce. "Na—na—nation add, greater than that."

Puz. Now throw me from you and I'll yield—very well!—keep that attitude—your eye fixed—there's a figure! there's a contrast! His majestic rage—and my timorous droop-um—"Are you a man—have you a soul of sense?"—Stay—stay—this will never do—we must think of some mechanical means

to keep your fire alive—such as whispering to yourself—"oh! hah!—bitch! hell!" &c. &c.

Bounce (repeats after him). "Oh! ah! bitch! hell," &c.

Puz. That's the mode of the mind: for if you observe the physical operations of nature, and the moral agency of the passions—when the soul is so far analyzed, as that the corporeal is entirely swallowed up by the intellectual—why then the organical powers are as it were stagnated—for stagnation I define to be a total absence of secession—so that the—— I am amazed *(in imitation of Macklin)* how—do you like him?

Freeman. Under so able an instructor he cannot fail.

Puz. Oh! this is nothing! I have, Mr. Freelove, more imagination than I know how to employ—more exquisite conceptions than I know how to be delivered of—This!—why this is nothing; this, Sir, is but a small part of my intention.

Freeman. What else, good Sir?

Puz. Why, in this cockpit—in this little round O, I intend to encircle all that can please and entertain—Burlettas, plays, lectures, bears, beasts, dancing dogs, and puppet-shews.

Manly. Puppet-shews!

Puz. Aye, Sir.

Manly. How do you contrive that?

Puz. That's the mystery—gucas.

Manly. Faith I can't.

Puz. Then I'll tell you.—Why as puppets are, you know, calculated to represent men and women; I make men and women imitate puppets.

Freelove. A most ingenious device!

Puz. Is it not? I think we shall be even with the little gentry—but still I see a cloud of doubt upon your brow; to remove that, take a short specimen of my intentions—

(Here the puppets.)

Manly. Was there ever such a coxcomb?

Freelove. Never—He is lively though—

Manly. Come, Freelove, let's march—I am satisfied.

Freelove. No, no, let's have 'em all.—Upon my word, Mr. Puzzle, this is a master-piece of invention.

Puz. Oh! mine is an olio—something to be found that will hit every taste—for those who dont like pork we have partridge.

Freeman. But your burletta—how is that brought about, Sir?

Puz. Oh! I have subjects in every science:—without Prompter! are the burletta people in waiting?

Prompt. Not come, Sir.

Puz. Why then call Wilkinson, he shall give his imitations.

Prompt. He is not in the house, Sir.

Puz. No!—What! not in the way to give his imitations! he his very negligent—but to prevent disappointment in the entertainment, I will give them myself.

(Here Wilkinson in the character of Foote, as Puzzle, gave an imitation of Foote and Mrs. Clive in Mr. and Mrs. Cadwallader and other characters, which filled up more than a quarter of an hour.)

Puz. That's unlucky!—but as all their materials are derived from me, I can give you a sketch of their execution.

Freeman. In what language?

Puz. Why, as we have already, Heaven be praised! nonsense enough in our own language, I intend confining that to the original—Italian.

Manly. It won't be understood.

Puz. Did you ever know nonsense that was? a smart remark that of yours.

Enter Prompter, who whispers PUZZLE.

Puz. The devil!

Prompt. This instant, Sir, the clerk waits for you.

Puz. A most mortifying interruption, gentlemen; I am immediately summoned before their Worships at Westminster, with severe threats if I proceed to execute my intended plan. D—n'd hard though, that poison should be allowed free vent at Sadler's Wells* and Isling, and an embargo laid on sound sense and satire at Drury-lane.

Freeman. Severe indeed!

* Alluding to the bad wine then sold at those places.

Puz. However, I shall trespass upon their patience for a quarter of an hour, to give you a hint of my burletta.

(Here the burletta.)

Puz. Gentlemen, your servant—if you can stay half an hour I will see you again—if not, "report me and my cause aright."—*(Exit Puzzle.)*

Freelove. Poor devil! Are you satisfied, Manly, or shall we wait his return?

Manly. No, I have enough. But you have missed your aim, Freelove. I am no proselyte to your pleasures: I long for my Sabine field; and when so distinguished a genius as Mr. Puzzle suffers persecution, I may say with the descendant of the great censor,

"The post of honor is a private station."

THE

TRIAL OF SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq.

FOR

A LIBEL ON PETER PARAGRAPH,

PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre Royal in the Haymarket, 1763.

Characters.

The Judge, ... MR. LEWIS, Sen.
Counsellor Demur (*ag. Foote*), MR. KENNEDY.
Counsellor Quirk, ... MR. FOOTE.*

Scene—the four Courts, Dublin.

Judge—*Counsel*—*Lawyers*, *&c. &c.*

DEMUR. My Lord, I am counsel against this Mr. Fot, and a pretty sort of a parson this Fot is every inch of him *(coughs)*—You may say that—whe—hee *(—a deep cough)*; but I should be glad to know what kind of right now this Fot has to be any body

* Mr. Foote, when retired from the court, slipped off his counsellor's wig and gown, and appeared as himself.

at all but himself Indeed, My Lord, I look upon it that he may be indicted for forgery—whe—hee—hee *(coughing)*—Every body knows that it is a forgery to take off a man's hand, and why not as bad as to take off a man's leg; beside, my Lord, it concerns yourself—yourself—for, God's willing, I don't despair in a little time of seeing your Lordship on the stage.

A pretty sort of business this, that your Lordship is to be taken off the bench, there, where you are sitting, without your knowing any thing—*at all—at all* of the matter, and all the while; that to your thinking, you are passing sentence here in the four courts, you may, for what you can tell, be hearing causes in the Haymarket.—So that, gentlemen of the jury, if you have a mind to keep yourselves to yourselves, and not suffer any body else to be, but you, yourselves, and your Lordship does not choose to be in London, Whilst you are living in Dublin, you will find the prisoner Fot guilty.

Judge. I agree entirely with my bother Demur, that this Fot is a most notorious offender, and ought to be taken measure of, and taught how dangerous a thing it is for him to tread upon other people's toes; and so as my brother observes, to prevent his being so free with other *people's legs*—we will lay him by the *heels*.

Quirk. My Lord, I move to quash this indictment, as irregular, and totally void of precision :—it is there said that Fot did, by force of *arms*, imitate the

lameness, &c. of said Peter Paragraph.—Now as we conceive this imitation could not be executed by the *arms*, but by the *legs* only—we apprehend the *laving out legs*, and putting in *arms*, corrupts and nullifies said indictment.

Demur. Fye—brother Quirk—the precedents are all quite *clane* against you; vide Serjeant Margin's Reports, chap. ix, p. 42, line 6, Magra against Murg.—Marga was indicted for assaulting by force of arms said Murg, by giving him a kick in the breech, and it was held good.

Judge. Where, brother Demur?

Demur. Ch. ix. p. 42, line 6. Magra against Murg.

Judge. Magra against Murg!

Demur. And in the same book, notwithstanding the same objection, Phelim O'Flanagan, for the *murder of his wife*, was found guilty of *Manslaughter*.

Quirk. My Lord—

Judge. You are, brother, out of season in your objection; you are too early; we will first find the traverser guilty of the indictment, and then we will consider if the indictment is good for any thing or not.

Demur. Yes, that is the rule—that is the law, every word of it.

Quirk. I submit.

Demur. Now, we will proceed to fix the fact upon Fot.—Call Dermot O'Dirty—This is a little bit of a printer's devil.

Quirk. We object to this witness.

Demur. Why so?

Quirk. He was convicted last Trim assizes of perjury, and condemned to be whipped.

Judge. And was he whipped?

Quirk. No, my Lord, he ran away from the gaoler.

Judge. Is he in court?

Demur. Yes.

Judge. Why, in his present state, O'Dirty is doubtless an incompetent witness; for not having suffered the law,—the books aver, he cannot be believed—but in order to restore his credit at once—here, gaoler, take Dermot O'Dirty into the street, and flog him handsomely; he will, by that means, become *rectus in curia*, and his testimony admitted of course.

Demur. Aye—that is the law: I have often known the truth whipped out of a man, but your Lordship has found the way to flog it into him again.

Judge. True, brother—I would not give twopence to try an innocent man, unless a jury could be found to bring him in guilty.—An able magistrate should have all the properties of a thorough-bred hound—be a good finder—a staunch pursuer, and a keen killer; for the great duty of a judge is to punish, and I am never so well *pleased* as when *I am doing my duty*.

Demur. Oh! I know it my Lord, you are a worthy magistrate.—Why, your Lordship is likely to have a great deal of pleasure this sessions, as there is a large list of prisoners I hear.

Judge. Yes, brother, and Heaven be praised! a good many for capital crimes!—I think, brother, if I have any luck, I shall be able to hang ten or a dozen.

Demur. Aye!

Judge. Aye—besides larcenies and other offences—why I don't despair, God willing—to give this Fot a very good flogging.

Demur. Indeed! why your Lordship will grow as fat as a pig. But I believe, my Lord, you have entirely lost one great branch of your business.

Judge. I am sorry for that brother—what can that be?

Demur. Treason—by my shoul, his Majesty's subjects all like their young master so well, that I don't believe you can find a traitor in all his dominions.

Judge. Oh! I shall be no great loser by that, the Irish have been always so obstinately loyal, that that branch never brought any great business to the bench—but proceed.

Quirk. I am instructed, my Lord, by my client, to move to put off this trial for want of a witness.

Judge. I cannot consent to that.

Quirk. We conceive this to be a natural right.

Judge. Aye—in common cases—such as a *rape*, or a *murder*, it is never denied—but this is a *libel*, and to be considered as a very heinous offence, and I question very much whether it does not amount to a nui-

sance, and fall under the legal description of a dunghill.

Demur. It is bad enough, to be certain; but, however, if the prisoner will give security, my Lord, that he will remove his dunghill, and not carry any more my client Peter Paragraph into company where he is not—why we will consent to put off the trial—and indeed he ought to be bound to keep the *face* to all his Majesty's subjects, and be forced to be *only himself*, all the while he stays here, but that I believe would be rather too hard upon him, for as he is so used to put on other people's faces, that I question very much if he has got ever a one of his own.

Judge. Be it so—

Quirk. Now, my Lord, I move for an information against Peter Paragraph for a libel.

Judge. Upon whom?

Quirk. Upon himself.

Judge. Himself!

Quirk. Aye—for if my client is a libeller for writing *The Orators*, Peter Paragraph, for printing and publishing it, is as guilty as he every whit*.

Judge. Unquestionably! take an information against Paragraph for libelling himself.

---

* It is a whimsical truth, that George Faulkner actually printed, published, and sold, THE ORATORS.

Demur. How!

Judge. Whilst I sit here, I will take care that none of the King's subjects shall take the liberty to libel themselves.

Demur. But he is the prosecutor.

Judge. That may be, brother Demur—but an information is too good a thing not to be given, and I could not help granting it—though it was against my father himself—the Court is adjourned.

(Exeunt all but Quirk.)

Quirk. Will you desire Mr. Fot to walk in—faith I am sorry this affair has taken such a turn—Where is he? Oh? you must drop all proceedings against Peter.

Mr. Foote. That's hard—I have, Mr. Counsellor, thrown a few couplets together; that, perhaps, may supply that deficiency, and I should be glad of your opinion—whether I could speak them with safety.

Quirk. Let us have them?

Foote.

Hush! let me search before I speak aloud—
Is no informer skulking in the crowd?
With art laconic, noting all that's said,
Malice at heart—indictments in his head;
Prepar'd to levy all the legal war,
And rouse the clam'rous legions of the bar!
Is there none such?—Not one; then *entre nous*
I will a tale unfold, though strange—yet true;
The application must be made by you.

At Athens, once fair Queen of arms and arts,
There dwells a citizen * of moderate parts;
Precise his manner, and *demure his looks*,
His mind unletter'd—though he dealt in books:
Amorpus, though old; though dull—*loved repartee*†,
And penn'd a paragraph most daintily.
He aim'd at purity in all he said,
And never once omitted *eth*, or *ed*;
In *hath*, and *doth*, was seldom known to fail,
Himself the hero of each little tale;
With wits and lords this man was much delighted,
And once (it hath been said) was near being knighted.
One Aristophanes, a wicked wit,
Who never heeded grace in what he writ,
Had mark'd the manners of this Grecian sage,
And thinking him a subject for the stage,
Had from the lumber cull'd, with curious care,
His voice—his looks—his gestures, gait and air,
His affectation, consequence, and mien,
And boldly launched him on the comic scene;
Loud peals of plaudits through the circles ran,
All felt the satire—for all knew the man.
Then Peter—*Petros* was his classic name,
Fearing the loss of dignity and fame,
To a grave lawyer in a hurry flies,
Opens his purse, and begs his best advice.

---

* George Faulkner.

† The words in *italics* were acted in imitation of Faulkner.

The fee secur'd—the lawyer strokes his band—
" The case you put I fully understand.
" The thing is plain from Cocos's Reports,
" For rules of poetry an't rules of courts.
" A libel this—I'll make the mummer know it,"
A Grecian * constable took up the poet,
Restrain'd the sallies of his laughing muse,
Call'd harmless humor—scandalous abuse.
The bard appeal'd from this severe decree,
The indulgent public set the pris'ner free ;
Greece was to him—what Dublin is to me.
Now, Sir—your judgment——

Quirk. Why, should he make any further attack upon this occasion, I think

" Solventur risu tabulæ, tu missus abibis."

" The formal process will be held in sport,
And you dismiss'd with credit from the court."

---

* The word GRECIAN is an appellation given to the natives of Ireland.

AN

OCCASIONAL PRELUDE

PERFORMED AT THE OPENING OF THE

Theatre Royal, in the Haymarket, 1767.

Dramatis Personæ.

Laconic, - - - - -	MR. PALMER.
Snarl, - - - - - -	MR. WESTON.
Scaffold, - - - - -	MR. BANNISTER.
Foote, - - - - - -	MR. FOOTE.

Scene—the Street.

Enter LACONIC *and* SNARL.

SNARL. What! master Laconic, whither are you rambling this evening? To collect, I reckon, the coffee-house compliments on your late epigrammatical efforts!—Well! I must say, for a terse point, a happy surprise, or a visible quibble, there is no man in this town can match little Laconic.

Lac. O fye, Snarl, this amongst friends!

Snarl. Nay, so much detraction itself must allow. Why, man, you are the very life and soul of the Chronicle; shut but the poets out of their corner, and we shall soon see an end of that paper.

Lac. I can't but say, Mr. Snarl, my conceits are pretty current in town—but then my genius is cramp-

ed. I could, perhaps, produce an epic equal to Virgil, or Iliad, or any of them there fellows of old; but to what end? Lack-a-day! I should never be read; no man's attention holds out now for more than six or eight lines—No—no, poor poetry is but a drug.

Snarl. Then why do you deal in it?

Lac. Nature impels:

"Whilst but a child, and yet unknown to Fame,
I lisp'd in numbers, and the numbers came."

A mere involuntary effusion of mine, a kind of poetical diabetes.

Snarl. Equally copious and insipid *(aside)*.

Lac. Could I bridle my impulse, D—mn me, Mr. Snarl, if I could hitch a rhyme, or clench a couplet again, as long as I lived.—No—no—the land of prose is the land of promise, aye, and of performance too: why, I dare say, you make more by a single letter from Leonora, or Buckhorse, or the Cobler of Cripplegate, than I do by a quire of epigrams.

Snarl. Our compositions are of a different kind, and have a different tendency.—Your purpose, my dear Laconic, is to amuse—mine, to reform; you tickle the ear with a rattle, a kind of jingling chime, which suits well enough with women and children; whilst I with my flapper rouse the public attention; and like another Hercules, my broom in my hand, cleanse this great Augean stable from every nuisance. To mend the world's a great design! Martial and Cato were different characters, Laconic.

Lac. I beg your pardon, my man of importance—Cato—hah! ha! ha! What! because you have filled up a ditch in Fleet-street—roused a slumbering watchman in the Strand—sent half a dozen beggars from pitch and hustle to Bridewell—widened the Devil's gap for lawyers, and brought a *habeas corpus* for a dunghill in Holborn.

Snarl. How!

Lac. These are thy triumphs—thy exploits, O Cato!

Snarl. Why, thou little clumsy fetterer of free-born English—thou slave to sounds—thou botcher of syllables—thou bawd to an echo: is it for thy circumscribed insignificant quill to record the public services of a Snarl?

Lac. They might with ease be crammed into a distich.

Snarl. Why, thou wasp of the buzzing creation, thou hast nought of the bee but his sting—answer me; who is it that has given decency to churches—politeness to play-houses—stability to the stocks, and security to the state, but a Snarl?

Lac. Why, as to the churches, if they all resemble that where I was last Sunday, the reform is not great; the ladies curtsied and whispered all the first part of the service, and the churchwardens snored so loud there was no hearing the sermon.

Snarl. Some paltry pewless place in the suburbs which the Gazetteer never reaches.

Lac. The play-houses still have their pantomimes; they have made one improvement, indeed, for most of

their new things are now set to music; so that, though our ears are wounded, our understandings are safe.

Snarl. Barbarian! unharmonious Goth!

Lac. Change-alley is still crowded—the stocks are a staple commodity—witness the bulls, bears, &c.; and as to the state, I'm sure you can't think that secure, for your paper overturns it at least three times a week.

Snarl. What a little satirical whelp!

Lac. Whelp! aye

"The critics call me cur from what I write,
With reason too, for like a cur I bite."

There's an extempore for you, that I composed before breakfast this morning.

Snarl. I believe I had best make it up with the reptile.—Nay, Mr. Laconic, you know I never denied the fire of your poetry.

Lac. Nor I the force of your prose; each in his walk, Mr. Snarl; but let us understand one another a little.—Like other actors before the public, indeed we ought to preserve the mask as well as we can, but when the curtain drops the deception should end.—My poetical flights are no more inspired by one of the Nine, than your prose animadversions are dictated by public spirit.

Snarl. Nay, but Laconic!—

Lac. The inducement with both is the same—*(eating).*

Snarl. Why! can you think I am in want of——

Lac. A dinner—sometimes I do.—What, don't I know the tricks of your trade, the old plan of plaintiff

and defendant.—Theatricus condemns,—Leonora defends,—Buckhorse reviles,—Tranquillus retorts,—what the Director asserts the Proprietor denies,—whilst all the time Theatricus, Leonora, Buckhorse, Tranquillus, the Director, and the Proprietor, all centre in one individual, called Timothy Snarl.

Snarl. Well—well—I see you have a mind to be pleasant, but a truce to our jangling—for what port are you bound?

Lac. A neighboring one—the new house in the Haymarket.

Snarl. Thither I am steering.

Lac. I suppose on the same design as myself—to observe?

Snarl. And communicate.

Lac. Why, I think it hard if I don't find food for my muse.

Snarl. And the devil's in it if a new play-house wont furnish a paper.

Lac. Allons!—but what pretence can we have to get on the stage?

Snarl. Here's a letter to introduce a young actress.

Lac. That will do.

Snarl. This Foote has given you good food in his time. I remember how brilliant you was upon his misfortune about a twelvemonth ago.

Lac. True! true!

Snarl. Ah! how sweetly you rung the chimes upon Foote and leg, and leg and foot—ah!—

Lac. Yes—that accident was lucky enough; it fur-

nished our paper in clinches and stings for more than a month—but wont you knock? *(Snarl knocks).*

Enter a Servant.

Snarl. Is your master within?

Ser. On the stage, Sir.

Snarl. Could we see him?

Ser. If you please, Sir.

Snarl. Lead the way. *(Exeunt.)*

Curtain draws up.

(Mr. *Foote* and *Servant* discovered.)

Ser. A couple of gentlemen, Sir.

Foote. Shew them in.

Enter SNARL *and* LACONIC.

Snarl. Here's a letter; when you have perused the contents, I should be glad of your answer.

Foote. Sir, you shall have it.

Snarl. I suppose there's no harm in taking a view?

Foote. By no means. *(Foote withdraws.)*

Lac. Ah! pretty enough! hark'ee, Snarl, this architecture! what order do you call it?

Snarl. Chinese.

Lac. I thought so, it looks so like a pagoda.

Snarl. Exactly!—d——d absurd, and quite out of nature!

Lac. Why the pit's in the cellar.

Snarl. And the gods in the clouds—and as to the boxes—

Lac. They are push'd into the street—then the stage—hold—what have we here?

Snarl. As I live a couple of ladies*.

Lac. Who are they?

Snarl. Oh! this inscription will tell us—Prisca; z—ds 'tis in Latin! pox take these impertinent puppies; what need any language to Englishmen but English? but they must be showing their learning.—Hark'ee, Laconic! you understand Latin.

Lac. Latin! *ad anquem.*

Snarl. Who is this same lass we have got here?

Lac. Pris—comedia—Oh! are you there? hah! hah! was there ever so absurd a design?

Snarl. What's the matter?

Lac. To put for a frontispiece a paltry comedian—it is only *Priscilla*, that's all.

Snarl. Priscilla—who was she?

Lac. She was an actress in Betterton's time—her name is in the old folio edition of Shakspeare, a good low comedian, but infernal ugly.

Snarl. I can't say her figure was much in her favor.

Lac. No—an absolute fright—but a vast fund of humor—she was the Clive of the company.

Snarl. And now for the other.

Lac. A bird of the same feather—*Sublato jure nocendi*,—the inscription does not tell us her name—but the hint is not a bad one for that gentleman there.

---

* Two figures, representing ancient and modern comedy.

Snarl. What is it?

Lac. To beware of a jury.

Snarl. Alluding I suppose, to what befel him in Ireland.

Lac. Not unlikely—but he is here——upon my word, Mr. What d'ye-call-um, you have made great alterations here.

Foote. I hope you approve them?

Snarl. As to that, we have not had time to consider minutely; but what do you say to my letter?

Foote. I am referred for the lady's qualifications to you, Sir—I suppose her figure——

Snarl. Is fine.

Foote Her age.

Snarl. But eighteen.

Foote. Flos ipse.

Snarl. No—that's not her name.

Foote. Her voice.

Snarl. Harmonious!

Foote. With power.

Snarl. As loud as a trumpet, then she sings like an angel.

Foote. Indeed!

Snarl. And is a perfect mistress of music.

Foote. These are valuable requisites for our profession—could I have the honor of seeing the lady?

Snarl. Whenever you please.

Foote. The sooner the better—to morrow,

Snarl. At what hour?

Foote. Betwixt eleven and twelve.

Snarl. You'll not disappoint me?

Foote. You may rely upon me.

Snarl. Very well;—come Laconic—but stay—there is one circumstance it may be proper to mention, as perhaps it may prove an objection.

Foote. What is it?

Snarl. As to the young gentlewoman's color; the lady's a black-a-moor.

Foote. A black!

Snarl. Yes.

Lac. Z——ds! Snarl—what!—a curlpated negroe?

Snarl. Aye—I suppose that won't make any difference.

Foote. None at all—a good actress, like a good horse, can't be of a bad color. I beg I may see her.

Snarl. You shall:—your servant.

(Exeunt Laconic and Snarl.)

Foote. Your very obedient.—Do you know who these gentlemen are?

Serv. No, Sir,—but there's one wants you without, that you know.

Foote. Who is he?

Serv. The builder.

Foote. Oh! bid him come in.

Enter SCAFFOLD.

Foote. Well, master Scaffold, what's the best news with you?

Scaff. Servant, master, I hope things are as they should be?

Foote. Perfectly.

Scaff. *Convenent*, and *greeable*, and quite *a-propoe!*

Foote. If the public, whose servant I am, are but satisfied, you are sure of my voice.

Scaff. Why, I don't see any fault they can find—the *orcheeter* is rather too small.

Foote. No, pretty well!

Scaff. Aye at present—but if in the winter you should choose to have *roratorioe*, you will scarce have room for the *hapsicol.*

Foote. Oh! that may be easily altered.

Scaff. True—well, master Foote—now let us talk a little about business.

Foote. Oh! the deuce!

Scaff. A pretty long account—here it is *(shows the bill.)*

Foote. Very well—but why do you bring it to me?

Scaff. To you—to be paid to be sure.

Foote. I pay you!

Scaff. Without doubt.

Foote. No—there you are mistaken, my good master Scaffold; you are much better off—it is these ladies and gentlemen who are to be your paymasters.

Scaff. What! the gentlefolks above and below?

Foote. Aye—the whole public; for if they don't, I am sure it is out of my power.

Scaff. Why—I can't but say but my security is mended; that is, if so be as how they be willing—

but—ah!—this is one of your skits now—ah! you'll never leave off—but come, master Foote, you should not be long-winded, consider what expedition we have made—all this work here in three months; a tight job, master Foote.

Foote. And you, master Scaffold, claim much merit from that.

Scaff. To be sure.

Foote. Look into the pit.

Scaff. Well—I do.

Foote. I will undertake, that less than half that number of hands shall undo more work in an hour, than you can complete in a year.

Scaff. May be so—I see there is amongst them some tight likely lads—but come, master, let us now be *serus* a little.

Foote. Upon my word I am serious; I consider myself but as a trustee for the public; and what their generosity bestows upon me, I will most justly assign over to you.

Scaff. Aye!—why then since that is the case, let us hear a little of how and about it—Well now, what scheme, what plan have you got to give a jog to the generous?

Foote. Why, I have some things they have liked, and others that I hope they will like.

Scaff. What, I suppose men and women, and talking stuff that you take out of play-books.

Foote. Of that kind.

Scaff. Ah!—pox! they will never do—could not you give them a christening, or a funeral! or hey!—aye—that is the best of them all—Zbobs! let them have a *crownation*.

Foote. No.

Scaff. No! why not? why then we shall have them crowd hither in shoals.

Foote. No, no, Scaffold;

"No long processions crowd my narrow scenes,
Lamp-lighting peer, and mantua making queens."

Scaff. Why, as you say, that work is little better than *scandalous magnatum*—hey! gad I have a thought! odd rot it, give 'em a pantomime. I likes to see that little patch-clouted feller slap one, and kick t'other, and then pop—he is out of the window.

Foote.

"Nor shall great Philip's son through our crime,
Sully his triumph by a pantomime."

Scaff. Philip! pshaw—I'd never mind Philip, nor any of the family; what harm can they do you?—Come do, and I'll bate of my bill—do—for the carpenter's credit.

Foote. Your credit?

Scaff. Aye—and to punish the pragmatical poets, for in that kind of work you will have no occasion for them—there, you know our trade takes the lead.

Foote. Well—well—we'l feel a little for the taste of the town, and if no other method can be found of paying your bill—for we, Mr. Scaffold, may assume what airs of reforming we please—the stage is at best

but an echo of the public voice—a mere rainbow—all its gaudy colors arise from reflection, or as a modern bard more happily says—

"The drama's laws—the drama's patrons give,
For we that live to please, must please to live."

Scaff. What then, after all, I find I am in a hobble.

Foote. May be not—come—hope for the best.—Prompter?

Prompter. Sir?

Foote. Are the actors ready to open?

Prompter. Immediately.

Foote. Stay and see the result of the evening.

Consult with care each countenance around,
Not one malignant aspect can be found,
To check the royal hand that rais'd me from the ground.

(Exeunt omnes.)

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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